

Our

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Old

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Sunday

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School

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150 YEARS
of Wigan Methodism

" History stores up the bravest deeds and noblest thoughts of the heroes of yesterday as soul food for the youth of to-day."

" History is no mausoleum where dead men lie buried; it is a granary storing up for future generations the choicest spirits of past ages."—N. D. Hillis.

John Wesley wrote in his famous Journal:—

" April 18, 1788: Notice having been given at Wigan of my preaching a Sermon for the Sunday School, the people flocked from all quarters in such a manner as never was seen before. I preached with all possible plainness on 'Repent ye and believe the Gospel' and it seemed to sink into the hearts of the hearers. Surely 'the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand'."

**Our Old
Sunday
School**

(and Day School)

150 Years of Wigan
Methodism

By C. DEANE LITTLE

Issued for the Ter-Jubilee
1783-1933

ONE SHILLING

Printed and Published by E. Sidebotham, Millgate, Wigan.

DEDICATED

TO

Every Young Methodist

in Wigan and District

AS A

Memorial

OF

OUR FATHERS' FAITH

AND A

Challenge

TO

OUR OWN.

THANKS

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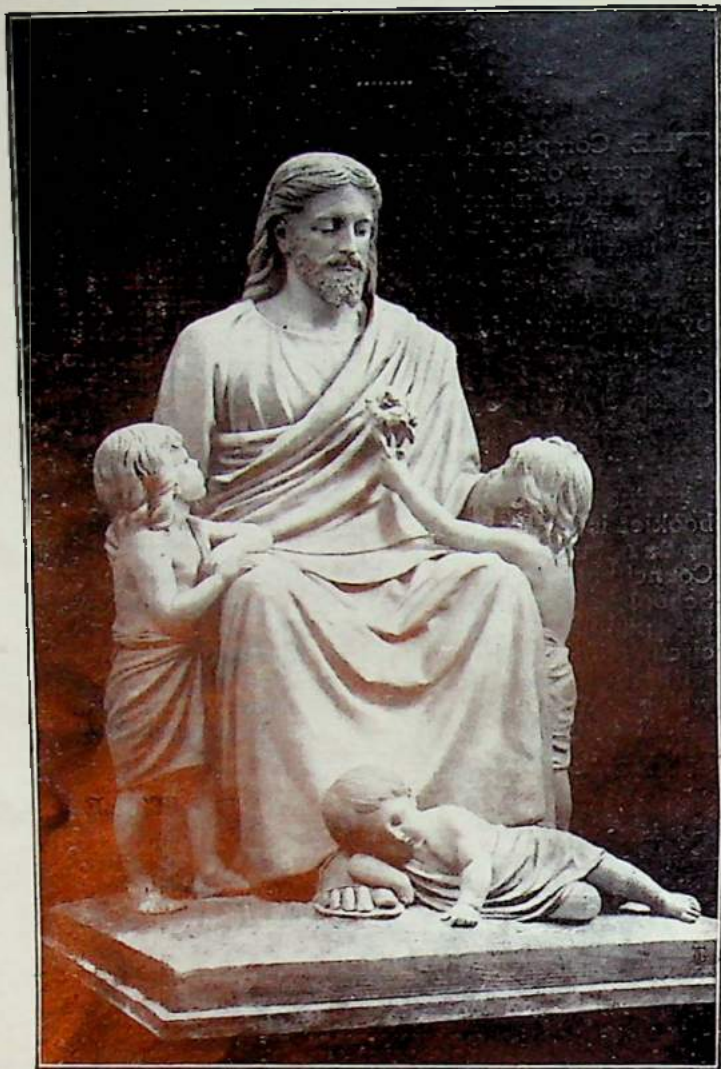
THE Compiler of this booklet is grateful to every one who has kindly helped him to collect these gleanings. Some acknowledgments have been made in the text, others are due to the manuscripts of the Rev. John Poulton, who lived in Wigan. These, with other valuable materials, were generously entrusted to the compiler's care by Mr. Samuel Melling, J.P., who also helped in many ways. The writer is also much indebted to the Wigan Reference Library, the "Wigan Observer," and to others whom he is not at liberty to name. To all these colleagues and collaborators sincerest thanks.

The Sunday School Council, for which this booklet is issued, desired that research should be made upon the earlier history of the School. The Council also wished that a Record of the Day School be added, and that the whole be sold at the popular price of One Shilling. In these circumstances, the writer has dealt but briefly with the modern history of the Sunday School, which, however, is carefully preserved in the school records and will increase in interest and value as the years progress.

C. DEANE LITTLE.

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JESUS AND THE CHILDREN.

From the Statue by George Tinworth, in Whitworth Park.

[By kind permission of the Whitworth Trustees, Manchester.]

Suffer the little children to come unto me.

Ye Olde Sunday School

1.—“HOW THE GOOD NEWS CAME TO WIGAN.”

The Religious Background.

Who is the first known Wigan Methodist?

About the year 1753 some youths were standing in the Old Market Place, and overheard a man at prayer. One of the lads was arrested by his voice, which came from behind the closed door of a cobbler's shop. Very anxious to see this unknown man of prayer, young William Langshaw begged his father to give him some old shoes needing repairs so that he might meet the shoe-maker who had apparently newly come to Wigan.

After discussing the shoe repairs, Langshaw broached the matter of the morning prayer. The cobbler, in some surprise, acknowledged that he had been praying. Langshaw then asked might he come next morning to their family prayers, and consent was gladly given. After the prayer Langshaw asked whether he could buy it. The shoemaker explained that the prayer was in his own words—from his heart, not from a book. Langshaw then asked where he also could learn to pray, and was told that he must go to the Methodists in Liverpool or Manchester.

LIKE DAVID AND JONATHAN.

The following Saturday he set off for Liverpool that he might attend the early morning service in Pitt-street. He remained for the afternoon service, and returned very satisfied to Wigan. Soon afterwards he met a like-minded friend in George Escrick, the pioneer Methodist of Bolton, and they became like David and Jonathan. Both men were remarkable walkers, remarkable also in zeal and generosity.

The morning service in Birchin-lane, the first chapel in Manchester, began at 9 a.m., before Church hours. William Langshaw therefore made it his practice to leave Wigan at 4 a.m., to meet George Escrick near Bolton, and they walked on in their clogs towards Manchester. Arriving at Pendleton they hid their clogs in a plantation, put on the shoes which they had carried, and walked into the city like gentlemen from the country.

They remained for the Class Meeting which followed the morning Worship and then for the afternoon Service. And walking homewards did not their hearts burn within them while they discussed their hope for a Methodist preaching house in Bolton. That hope and prayer was realised in Acresfield in 1755, and a Class Meeting was begun a few years later in Wigan.

How did John Wesley first reach the Wigan District?

In his famous "Journal," John Wesley thus records his own first entry under date May 9th, 1759. "I rode to Downall Green, near Wigan, a town wicked to a proverb . . . but in a short time the word of God prevailed, and all their fierceness melted away." Wesley passed on the same day to Bolton, but made a return visit to Downall Green in 1761. **The seed took root. The**

Downall family became Methodists, and services were continued in a room of Miss Downall's until her death about 1840. Methodism still thrives in Downall Green, and Councillor R. Lewis, Mayor of Wigan 1931, is the present honorary minister of the Independent Methodist Church in that vicinity.

Some five years later John Wesley, "the evangelical Centaur," first rode into Wigan in 1764 from Bolton. He followed the roadway of that day from Ince to Scholes, then glancing at the Windmill he descended to the bank of the Douglas and crossed by a very narrow bridge near an ancient watermill. He caught sight of the old Grammar School, then passing up Millgate he saw the old gaol built in the reign of Henry VIII. and also the coal-pit on the site where the present Technical College now stands. Arriving at the Toll-house at the top of Millgate there was then no thoroughfare direct to Standishgate. Wesley therefore, like all other travellers, turned to the left and passed down the Wiend (or Wynd, as it is spelled to-day in Scotland) a narrow, winding passage which was for centuries an artery lined by small but busy shops and important offices.

Wesley, then 63 years of age, had already become a great national figure. Mr. Augustine Birrell's estimate of him is generally recognised as just—"No man ever lived nearer the centre than John Wesley . . . You cannot cut him out of our national life. No single figure influenced so many minds, no single voice touched so many hearts. No other man did such a life work for England."

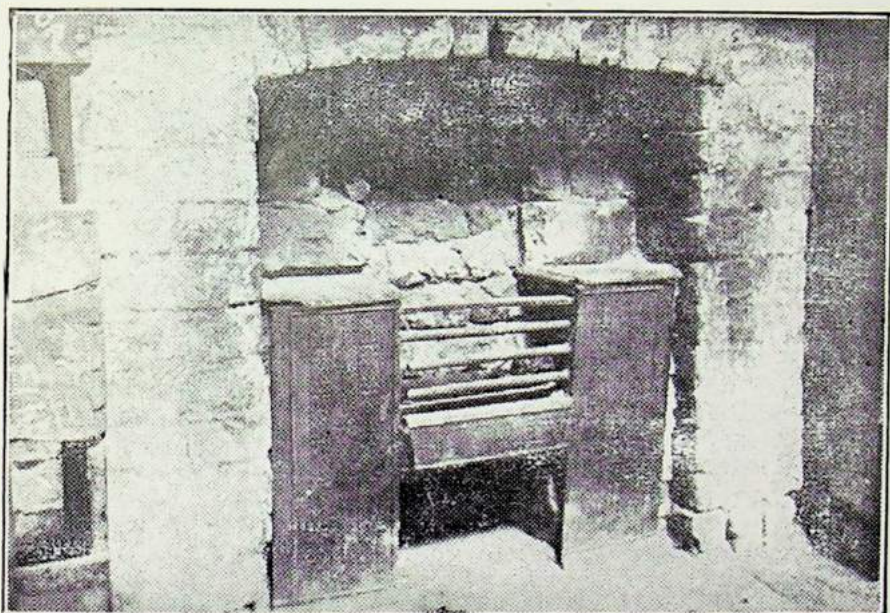
Wesley's own record of his entry into Wigan he thus gives: "July 13th, 1764. At ten I began to preach at Wigan proverbially famous for its wickedness. As I preached abroad (in the open-air) we expected some disturbance. But there was none at all. A few were wild at first, but in a little while grew quiet and attentive. I did not find so civil a congregation the first time I visited Bolton."

It would be interesting to know the names of the early Christians from Rome who met St. Paul at the Three Taverns; and it would be no less interesting to us to know who welcomed John Wesley when he first visited Wigan in 1764. Amongst the faithful few were doubtless William Langshaw and his friend the cobbler, and John Leyland, the first class-leader.

There were doubtless also faithful women such as Betty Brown, of Cinnamon Row, Standishgate. She died suddenly in 1781. Wesley hurried to Wigan from Warrington to preach her funeral sermon and in his Journal quotes a fine tribute made by "brother Leyland" to her devotion.

Soon after Wesley's visit the early Methodists hired an Upper Room. On his second visit he preached in a disused theatre which still exists. In his famous Journal, Wesley wrote on 6th April, 1768, "About eleven I preached at Wigan in a place near the middle of the town, which, I suppose, was formerly a play-house. It was very full and very warm, most of the congregation were wild as wild could be; yet none made the least disturbance. Afterwards, as I walked down the street, they stared sufficiently, but none said an uncivil word."

This place "near the middle of the town" which Wesley supposed "was formerly a play-house," can still be seen. Passing up the Wiend you will see this historic building shorn of its furnishings, like Samson of his locks, and it is now an iron warehouse for Messrs. Park & Co.



THE ANCIENT FIRE-PLACE

Of great interest is a room immediately above the pit of the Playhouse, for this is the cradle of Wigan Methodism. This room rented by the Methodists is about 13 yards by 10 yards, and was cheered by an ancient fire-place, which, with its original fire-bars, is still in existence. What rapturous songs were sung around that fire! What stories told of deliverance and triumph! What curious old-world figures, the brethren in their "small clothes" and the sisters in their poke bonnets! To the early Methodists "trousers" were a badge of "worldliness" and bobbed hair could only mean perdition! And what "experiences" they related! Surely they regaled themselves with stories of the dawn of Methodism in Downall Green, in Aspull, and in Lamberhead Green. They arranged lodging for man and beast when the travelling preacher would come in the following month from Liverpool. They wondered when Wesley himself would come again, and would he help them to beg for money to build a preaching house? A dream which materialised in a most romantic way.

The year 1774 marked an epoch in the history of Wigan Methodism. In January, Samuel Bradburn, of Wrexham, a young local preacher of twenty-two years, was invited by friends to visit Liverpool. John Morgan, one of the Liverpool travelling preachers, was lame and so Bradburn, at his request, frequently visited Wigan and preached in the upper room above the old Playhouse at the Wiend.

Samuel Bradburn gradually became famous and for forty years was called "the Methodist Demosthenes." He was the first in order of time of the three great clerical orators of Methodism, Bradburn, Newton, and Punshon. Is it any wonder that this upper room soon became over-crowded and out-grown? Langshaw then proposed the building of a Chapel and secured immediate assent.



SAMUEL BRADBURN

Langshaw generously gave fifty pounds, Mr. Thomas Doncaster, the Methodist proprietor of one of the two Wigan banking firms, also gave fifty pounds, and the remaining members promised fifty pounds between them.

This sum being quite inadequate, Langshaw offered, if Bradburn would accompany him, to go to Manchester, and even to London, to collect the necessary funds. Permission to build the chapel—providing they could pay for it—was secured from Mr. Wesley, and he also wrote a letter commending this good cause to the people called Methodists. The travellers also obtained a letter of commendation from the two circuit ministers at Liverpool; and appreciating his need, friends in Wigan provided the young preacher with a new suit. Langshaw carried this suit in his saddlebags, and says that once or twice when Bradburn was discouraged and talked about turning back he reminded him that if he did the Wigan people would not allow him to retain the suit!

Picture then an embryo Circuit Steward setting out with an embryo orator to collect money for the first Methodist Chapel in Wigan which was as yet not even in embryo! Bradburn was very youthful in appearance, but dressed as a Travelling Preacher in blue coat, knee breeches, buckled shoes, and a three-cornered hat.

Bradburn's Manuscript Diary, preserved by the Conference Office, London, describes this epic trip:

"1774. We left Wigan on the sixth of June. We went through Manchester, Sheffield, Rotherham, Critch, Derby, Nottingham, and Loughborough. At each of which places I preached, explained the affair, and made a collection."

"We arrived in London the 22nd June . . . I was delighted with the friendly, noble, spirit wherever we went. We stayed in London ten weeks, about three of which I was confined by a violent

fever; my life was despaired of, but my work was not done.

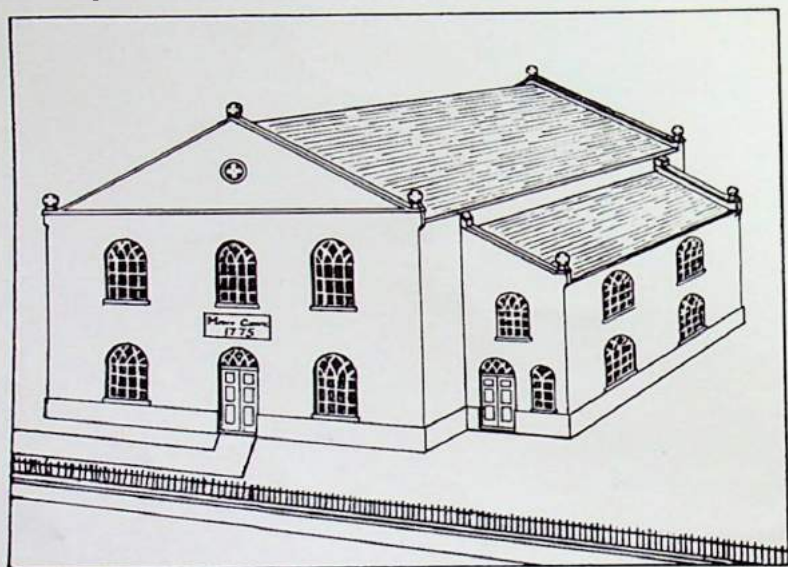
Our business being finished Mr. Langshaw and I left London first of September, and returned to Wigan through Wycombe, Oxford, Worcester, Birmingham, Wednesbury, and Newcastle-under-Lyne. At Birmingham we met with Mr. T. Olivers, who showed us every mark of brotherly love, as became a man of God. He made an excellent speech after preaching, and obtained a good collection for our chapel."

Samuel Bradburn was of humble origin; his mother took him away from school when the school fees were raised from one penny per week to three-halfpence! During this trip to London Bradburn, who was as yet a local preacher, was received into the Ministry. Bradburn, diligently self-educated, was greatly gifted. He soon became Superintendent of the Bolton Circuit, Chairman of the Liverpool District, and rapidly rose to the highest position in Methodism. In 1799 he was raised to Wesley's Chair as President of the conference. So great was his aid in founding the Wigan Chapel that at first it was popularly known as "Bradburn's Chapel."

The Conference of July, 1774, appointed Bradburn to the Liverpool Circuit and thus he was enabled to continue his work in Wigan, then in the Liverpool Circuit. Land was conveyed on July 2nd, 1774, to Thomas Doncaster, goldsmith, and William Langshaw, gentleman, from Rev. Edward Smalley, Rector of Wigan and of Standish, and John Anderton, maltster. This land was "part or parcel of the Chequers Croft" and adjoined the Parish Church yard. It measured 35 yards by 40 yards and was approached by a passage called the "Buck-i'-th'-Vine Yard" in Wallgate (now the passage between the Clarence Hotel and the Princes Cinema). The land cost £70 and it contained no buildings. The original Deed and *all* succeeding legal documents, mortgages, etc., have been preserved and have been closely studied through the kindness of their present holders, the Estate Office of the L.M. and S. Railway, Manchester. The Town Clerk and the Borough Engineer of Wigan have very kindly helped us by the use of old maps to ascertain the *precise* position of this first chapel. It stood in large part on the site where the Y.M.C.A. now stands and had a gallery around three sides. The original Deeds contain a plan of the *interior* and of surrounding buildings at various dates. The drawing here shown is reconstructed from plans and measurements given on the Deeds, and for these the author is chiefly indebted to Mr. Frost of the L.M.S. Estate Office. A wealth of other interesting detail is available, but cannot here be indicated as this booklet is limited to the Sunday School which was housed in this original building and in its two-storey vestry.

Wesley visited Wigan on July 25th, 1775, and wrote in his immortal Diary, "About noon I preached in the shell of the house at Wigan. In the middle of the sermon came an impetuous storm of thunder, lightning and rain which added much to the solemnity of the occasion." Tradition says that Wesley told the men to put on their hats and that the storm was caused by "the Prince of the air" who was wrathful at the introduction of Methodism to Wigan, but Wesley's opponents claimed that the storm was

evidence of Divine displeasure! Wesley speaks of the "shell" of the buildings for the roof had not yet been put on, the building had been delayed through inability to pay the workmen and was not



CHAPEL and SCHOOL ROOMS, 1775. Buck-i'-th'-Vine Yard, Wallgate.

ready for use until the following year. Wesley re-visited Wigan on April 15th, 1776. "About noon I preached in the new house at Wigan to a very quiet and very dull congregation." . . . Bradburn had left Wigan after the Conference in 1775, and apparently a slump had ensued. A revival soon arose and one gladly inserts a tribute to the Methodism of 1781, written by W. B. Shaw in his "Presbyterianism in Wigan": "Meanwhile the Methodists who settled in Wigan in 1776 had built a chapel in Wallgate and steadily secured an important place in the hearts of the people. There can be no minimising the important influence which the fervour and zeal of their evangelical teaching had upon the life of the town, for though Presbyterianism may have been the first non-conforming body established in the town, it could not well be called an evangelical Church. For many years the evangelical aspect of Christian truth was represented by the followers of Wesley alone, and the value of the pioneer work they accomplished during these dark days cannot be overestimated. Their devotion and spirit have laid other denominations under a great debt, for the comparative ease with which the roots of denominationalism have struck into the soil they so well prepared."

II.—THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL BACKGROUND.

Wigan from 1775 to 1800.

When our Sunday School was founded one hundred and fifty years ago in 1783, the "ancient and loyal Borough" was very

different from what it is to-day. It is difficult to realise how scanty was then the population in Lancashire. Liverpool in 1773 had but 34,407 people, Manchester and Salford 27,246. Cromwell had described Wigan as 'a great and poor town'; its obvious poverty was due to repeated military plunderings. Its population was well under 10,000, yet this was 'great' in contrast with Bolton and Little Bolton, which had only 5,339 inhabitants in 1773, and Bury which in 1772 had only 2,090.

The oldest maps show that the town consisted chiefly of a ribbon street stretching from Wigan Lane to the present Newtown. There were several short side streets and many alleys, courts, folds, rows, and yards, to say nothing of passages and entries! The life of the town, especially on Friday, the market day, centred around the Old Market Place, with its old Town Hall (rebuilt in 1720), the Moot Hall (and Treasury), which stood far out, blocking the thoroughfare of Wallgate, and nearly opposite to this the new Cloth Hall which preceded the Commercial Hall of 1816 and the present Market Hall of 1877.

The town had two additional sections, one a select community called Hallgate, sheltering around the Manor House and Vicarage, and the other Scholes, a straggling quarter connected with the town by Millgate. Hallgate, like Scholes, had its annual horse races and appointed for the day a "Master of Mischief," who was known as the Mayor of Hallgate. The town was ill-paved, undrained, and unlit. There was a pump in Wallgate and several other pumps and wells, and a rudimentary system of water-supply by wooden pipes from Whitley Springs.

There was no gas until 1823, no electric light, no petrol fumes, no short skirts, and no permed hair! The town possessed an ancient Grammar School, a Blue Coat School (founded in 1773), and some small private and Dame schools. There was also the old gaol, the Bradshaigh Almshouses, and 'a good and convenient Work House'! The chief occupation was mining, in which pit-women shared all the honours both underground and overground and all the risks. Farming, spinning and weaving were also staple employments. There were then no tall chimneys, no clashing machinery, no mass production, but with slow and patient strokes the weaver drove his shuttle. This hand loom-weaving was a cottage industry, employing men, women, and children, and was usually done in cellars under the cottages. Several of these old dwellings are still to be seen in parts of old Wigan with long flights of steps leading to the living rooms. In 1772 a traveller, Nathanael Spencer, speaks of the town as making woollen blankets, checks, rugs, and coverlets; fustian and calicoes were also made.

In 1769 James Watts invented the condensing steam engine, and in the next twenty years a group of brilliant inventions by Hargreaves, Arkwright, Crompton and Cartwright rapidly turned the cotton trade from a handicraft into a machine industry. Small cotton mills appeared, one in Bolton in 1780, followed by the Princess mill in Wigan. This was aptly called "the Old Hole," one of the "dark satanic mills" which made small appeal to either the poet Blake or the artistic Ruskin! Early mills gradually appeared in Aspull, Ince, Hindley, etc., and power looms soon followed. The way for this rapid development of the cotton

industry had been prepared by the opening of the Liverpool to Wigan section of the Leeds and Liverpool canal in 1774. The rapid growth of the canal system also led to an increased export of coal; this in its turn led to an expansion of the ancient iron foundries and forges on the banks of the Douglas. The town had also manufactures of steel weighing machines, steel crossbows and fowling pieces, clocks, braziers, pewtery pottery and important bell founding.

The roads in Lancashire at this time were execrable and the day of the stage coach in Lancashire had only just dawned. We read of ruts four feet deep and filled with slush on the road from Preston to Wigan. No stage coach had yet appeared in Wigan. Ladies used sedan chairs or rode in pillion fashion, and in the absence of wheeled traffic the pack-horse carried both the furniture and bales of clothing. There is some advantage, however, even in an execrable road. Wesley had been very ill before coming to Wigan to open the Chapel in 1775, and wrote on that Opening day: "I found one relief of my illness—my hand shook so that I could hardly write my name. But after I had been well electrified by driving four or five hours over the very rugged, broken pavements, my complaint was removed and my hand was as steady as when I was 10 years old."

It was not until April, 1774, that a stage coach began to run between Liverpool, Warrington and Manchester, and that ran only twice a week. In the same year coaches began to run between Liverpool and Preston and were known as "machines on wheels"!

THE FOUNDATION OF OUR WIGAN SUNDAY SCHOOL.

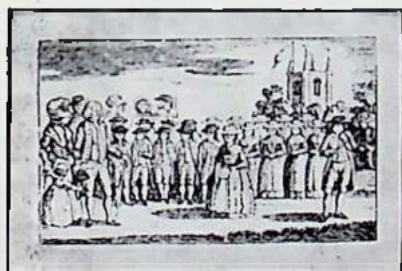
Our survey of life in Wigan towards the close of the Eighteenth Century shows that the town was not a sleepy place but was alive with interest and variety. Few, however, were free to enjoy this wider life. The inhabitants were mostly poor, ignorant and unprivileged and many were sunk in squalor, disease, and vice. The streets and "rabbit burrows" teemed with children, coarsely clad, unkempt, wild, scabby, and unclean. The pitiful spectacle of such neglected children had already started a movement in the reign of Queen Anne, known as "The Charity School" to teach poor children both how to read and the elements of religion. This was soon followed by the Sunday School Movement which was philanthropic as well as religious. The earliest Sunday School sought to save children from vagrancy and crime and to teach them reading and writing, and the Bible was ready to hand as a spelling and story book. No attempt need here be made to enumerate the earliest Sunday Schools, but one may mention those of the Rev. Joseph Alleine, at Bath, 1660—68, and Bishop Wilson.



ROBERT RAIKES.

in the Isle of Man, 1703. The first *Methodist* Sunday School began in High Wycombe in 1769, and still exists. In Lancashire the first Sunday School was opened by Jemmy Heyes (Jemmy o'-th'-Heyes) in 1775 in Little Lever. Robert Raikes began his work at Gloucester in 1780. It will thus be seen that the Sunday School movement was not originated, as is commonly imagined, by Raikes. He is, however, rightly called "the Apostle of Sunday Schools." Raikes had vision and an understanding sympathy; he organised a successful Sunday School in 1780, then in 1783 began as an Editor to give publicity to his ideals and experiments which he very aptly described as "botanising in human nature." Wesley warmly approved and broadcasted his approval; so did the genial Bishop Porteus, of Chester, whose Diocese then included Wigan. The hour had struck for the Sunday School movement, and the Leader had arisen. Raikes was called to Court in 1787 by Queen Charlotte and received Royal approbation, and in 1788 the Court Ladies began to teach the children of the poor in Sabbath Schools. Before the time of Raikes, Sunday Schools were rare and isolated phenomena: he left them a great National institution.

In 1782 the Methodists in Chester and Rochdale began Sunday School work and those schools are apparently the oldest in Methodism after High Wycombe



TWO OLD SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

In 1783 there came to Samuel Baldwin, a pewter worker, a constraint to found a Sunday School. How had he heard of such schools? He was then only twenty-two years of age, but was gifted with compassion, faith, and initiative, and upon him had fallen the mantle of Samuel Bradburn. He saw the conditions and needs of child-life in Wigan and had probably heard from the Round preachers (as the Circuit preachers were then called) and other travellers of the good work in Gloucester and perhaps in Chester or Rochdale. He doubtless also conferred with John Leyland, his class leader, with William Langshaw, and with John Baxendale, a chapman (that is, a travelling cheapman) and linen draper, whom Wesley had invited to become an Itinerant; and finally the school was launched. A similar school was begun the following year in Leigh, but died through persecution. Many other early Sunday Schools also died for various reasons, especially the difficulty of paying the teachers their small weekly allowance of about one shilling each. It is a remarkable fact that the schools

established by Raikes in Gloucester died out, but the Methodist school in Wigan, where teachers were not paid, abode in strength. Four years after Raikes had founded his school, Wesley wrote "I find these Sunday School springing up wherever I go; perhaps God may have a deeper purpose therein than we are aware of. Who knows but some of these schools may become nurseries for Christians?"

When our school was founded there was no Sunday School in any city in England except Gloucester, and very few in any other place. The example of Wigan was quickly followed by the Recorder of Liverpool. That worthy man, Ralph Peters, Esq., lived at Platt Bridge Hall, and founded a Sunday School in Hindley in 1784. St. Paul's Chapel, Wigan (then in the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion), followed suit in 1785. Methodism also led the van in 1784 by opening the first Sunday School in Manchester, and also the far-famed Stockport Sunday School. The Bolton Circuit, which included Wigan, was separated from Liverpool in 1784, and a great Methodist Sunday School was established in Ridgeways, Bolton, in 1785. This school was the mother of all Bolton Sunday Schools, and probably our Wigan school was their grandmother.

The work of the Sunday School had a warming and refining influence upon the people as Wesley found on his visit of 1785: "In the evening I preached at Wigan. I never before saw this preaching house full; but it was more than full to-night and with deeply attentive hearers." The first mention of our Sunday School in print is given when Wesley wrote in his Journal on Friday, April 7th, 1786, "*I made a flying visit as swiftly as I could through Manchester, Wigan and Bolton to preach Sunday School sermons.*" In the next year he wrote to Rd. Rodda commending Sunday Schools as "one great means of reviving religion throughout the Kingdom." Wesley returned to Wigan and wrote on April 18th, 1788, "*Notice having been given of my preaching a sermon for the Sunday School the people flocked from all quarters in such a manner as never was seen before.*" Wigan has a great distinction in that Wesley twice went there to preach Sunday School sermons. The great evangelist passed on to Bolton and two days later wrote regarding Sunday Schools: "I think these schools are one of the noblest specimens of charity which have been set on foot in England since the time of William the Conqueror." Even in 1788 Sunday School Anniversaries moved the whole community and brought out folk from hills and dales. Fiddles led the singing, and gradually flutes, 'cellos, horns, trumpets, and choruses were introduced. Sometimes the music overcame the preacher. Once when Bradburn was in Bolton the Choir sang a great Chorus, "the horse and his rider He hath cast into the sea." The refrain recurred time and time again, 'the horse' . . . 'the horse' . . . 'the horse' until finally Bradburn roared out "We have had enough of that horse, put him into the stable!"

Wesley paid his last visit to Wigan on April 9th, 1790, at the age of 87, and within a year of his translation. The old hostility to Methodism had long since died and his annual visits in Spring were now in the nature of triumphal processions, some even dared to call the event "the Wesley Fair"! One can picture his radiant

face and active figure passing through the Old Market Place in gown and bands with his long silvery hair waving in the breeze. This is his final benediction: "We went to Wigan, for many years proverbially called wicked Wigan. But it was not what it was. The inhabitants in general have taken a softer mould. The house in the evening was more than filled; and all that could get in seemed to be greatly affected, while I strongly applied the Lord's words 'I will, be thou clean!'"

One youth amongst the audience was deeply impressed and we know in full the story of his life. His name was William Atherton, he entered the Ministry from Lamberhead Green in 1797. He "opened" a clock in the old Chapel in 1813 and that old clock, still inscribed with his name, was transferred to Standishgate and is still bravely ticking out the time!—120 years, not out. William Atherton was Wesley's successor as President of the Conference in 1846, and in the previous year had the joy of opening Standishgate Chapel for public worship. He passed to his reward in 1850, and The "Atherton" Wesleyan School in Lamberhead Green, built in 1856, was named in memory of that valiant son of Wesley and of Wigan Methodism.

Wesley died on March 2nd, 1791. It was generally feared that upon his death the disruption of Methodism would ensue. Disruption in many societies was avoided by compromise but came to Wigan. Richard Condy, a grand man sent by the Conference of 1794, found the Chapel closed against him. He forced admission, but soon lost the premises, and from 1794 till 1808 there was a see-saw of occupation and abandonment. Wigan had become a Circuit in 1793, but lost this status six years later and was then incorporated in turns by the Preston, Bolton and Leigh Circuits. Yet during all these distressful years the Sunday School still carried on. There is no indication that the Sunday School ever closed down even though the "loyal" Wigan members dropped to nine in number and had perforce to worship in a rented room.

The Rev. James Wood, Chairman of the Liverpool District and twice President of the Conference, visited Wigan in 1802 to conduct the Sunday School Anniversary. Wigan was then in the Preston Circuit and without a resident Minister, and had only Service on alternate Sundays. Mr. Wood was so pleased with the improved prospects at Wigan that he asked a young man in Liverpool to go as a supply to Wigan. To this young man, William McKittrick, we owe much. In an unpublished MSS. he says: "In February, 1803, I took the Canal Packet from Liverpool to Wigan. . . I went to Mr. Healey's, Church Croft. On Sunday he took me to Lamberhead Green to preach. Most of the people were hand-loom weavers and miners, and very poor. But they had long been without preaching and did not expect it to-day. However, the bell was tolled for 20 minutes, but the people had not prepared their Sunday clothes. Yet they came to hear, and such a motley congregation I never saw before. Many a woman had a shawl wrapped round her head and a child on her bosom, and the men were nondescript in appearance. However, I felt my whole soul drawn to them. At the close of the service a man came to the pulpit stairs and said, "God has sent you here, Sir."

SUNDAY SCHOOL OFFICERS AND TEACHERS.



Back Row: R. Tickle, T. Mellng, R. H. Dawson, E. Eagles, H. Thomas, S. Tickle, I. Thomas, W. H. Moorfield, J. Gillibrand, C. Yates.
 Middle Row: Misses H. Stevenson, E. Harrison, M. Stevenson, M. Harrison, M. Leyland, M. Foster, B. Mason, M. Varo, B. Moorfield, L. Taylor, I. Stevenson, M. Wood, W. H. Kushon.
 Front Row: Miss E. Taylor, Mrs. T. Cowling, Miss E. Wail, G. A. Teller, Mrs. H. Blacow, Miss E. Dainty, Mrs. H. Dickson.

I replied, "Yes, or I had never come." "I preached at Wigan at six o'clock in a good chapel."

This writer goes on to tell of William Langshaw and how he knew him and his wife and daughter after Langshaw had retired to live in Sharples, near Bolton. McKittrick served in the Ministry from 1803 for 55 years. He, like St. Luke, loved to trace the course of all things accurately from the first. He handed to Mr. Joseph Meek all the information he had collected from Langshaw and the other early Methodists, and to him we owe our thanks.

Who were the first Teachers in our Wigan School?

In addition to the men already mentioned, probably some of the first Trustees were teachers: for example, William and James Barrow, hatmakers, of Wallgate, Thomas Fearuley, of Ashton and Ince, a 'yeoman,' who became a Round preacher in 1790, and Thomas Kennerdell, watchmaker. In the early days it was usual for the teachers to come from a distance, and so other early workers may be found amongst the Trustees of the Lauberhead Green Chapel, built in 1790—Thomas and James Atherton, Thomas Sharrock, Robert Daglish (father of the well-known engineer), John Almond, Peter and John Barlow, John Taylor, Thomas Hitchen and Thomas Knowles—men whose descendents are still living around 'the Green'!

The Sunday School was held in the Chapel and its galleries and its lower and upper vestries which both opened into the Chapel. Other early teachers may be found amongst the new Wigan Trustees who were appointed in 1803. Samuel Baldwin, our founder, was one of these. His fellow-trustees may also have helped in the Sunday School from its foundation. Their names are: James Crutchley, bookkeeper; Gabriel Shaw, chapman; John Cartwright, cotton manufacturer; Richard Barrow, hatmaker; John Healey, of Churchcroft, engineer; Peter Howarth, manufacturer; Joseph Willgoose, gunsmith; John Knowles, Orrell, check manufacturer. Wives and daughters also gave willing help, like Mistress Hannah Ball, who founded the High Wycombe School, and Sophia Cook, who boldly marched with Raikes and his ragamuffin army on their first parade to the Parish Church in Gloucester. She afterwards became the second wife of Samuel Bradburn.

In seeking to re-create our Sunday School of 1783, one needs to study the scanty historical sketches of all other Sunday Schools opened between 1780 and 1800. Many of the founders of the early schools in Lancashire are known to have corresponded with Raikes and obviously owed much to his advocacy, example, and inspiration.

Conditions in our early Sunday School were delightfully primitive. The spirit of Raikes prevailed: "All that I required were clean faces, clean hands, and hair combed. If you have not a clean shirt, come in what you have on." In the first months the school was doubtless often uproarious; quarrels arose, and pupils were frequently admonished to refrain from swearing! Manners they had none, and their habits were beastly. Little savages and young hooligans were sometimes expelled, and at a

SUNDAY SCHOOL JUNIORS, 1933.



(Left to Right):

Front Row: B. Cowling, M. Branley, G. Greenhalgh, B. Pincock, N. Pistewate, P. Callaghan, M. Thomson, B. Seddon, P. Mills, F. Thomson, A. Lea, J. Callaghan, R. Parr, F. King, L. Boardman, N. Greenwood, G. Halliwell, H. Gogarty.

Second Row: W. Arrowsmith, B. Daebysire, K. Pincock, C. Taberner, A. Parkin, R. Williams, A. Seddon, R. Moss, M. McNamara, J. Chadwick, H. Falla, L. Morris, M. Griffiths, G. Mills, K. Gaskell, J. Gogarty, N. Mills, J. Gaskell, A. Callaghan, Miss J. Stevenson.

Third Row: Mrs. Dainty, Mrs. Cowling, Mrs. J. Stevenson, Miss M. Wood, J. Greenwood, J. Moss, E. Hutchinson, L. Gratten, H. Thompson, B. Taberner, E. Melling, C. Morris, M. Grey, M. King, L. Gogarty, J. Millard, S. Gray, M. Gould, Miss B. Moorfield, Miss M. Vero.

Fourth Row: Miss L. Taylor, S. Gaskell, R. Parr, L. Gibson, J. King, V. Helm, D. Bashforth, A. McNamara, I. Thomas, M. Eagles, C. Thomas, A. Moss, M. Morris, E. James, D. Ward, M. Jones, Miss M. Stevenson, Miss M. Harrison, Mrs. Dixon.

Fifth Row (back): Miss B. Mason, H. E. Thomas, W. Melling, I. L. Thomas.

later date one of our teachers was marked off the roll as either 'tired' or 'fired'! These undisciplined scholars attended no day school and hence the work and hours of the early Sunday School resembled those of a day school, generally from 9 a.m. till 12 and from 2 till 5 p.m., including the time spent in Church Services. In summer the scholars' feet were clad with dust and sunshine; in winter they wore clogs. The boys had neither collars nor ties, but simply scarves, and the girls were delighted to wear a penny chain of beads. In those days paper was dear and the alphabet classes were taught their letters by the use of a sand tray. Quills were provided for the writing classes on Friday and Saturday nights, and ink was often made from blacking. Little rewards were given of books, combs, and shoes, and our teachers were sometimes awarded "a token of respect"—generally a hymnbook or "an old Bible."

The oldest printed notice which we possess relating to the School is a Hymn Sheet 15-in. x 8-in., printed thus:—

HYMNS

To be sung in the
Methodist Chapel
Wigan

On Sunday, May 24th, 1812

By children instructed in that Sunday School,
when Sermons will be preached
By The Rev. Samuel Taylor
(from Bolton)

And **Collections** made for the Support of that excellent Institution,
Service to begin at Two o'Clock in the Afternoon,
and at Six in the Evening.

This hymn sheet contained four hymns and the first one began very suitably,

"Again the kind revolving year
Has brought this happy day."

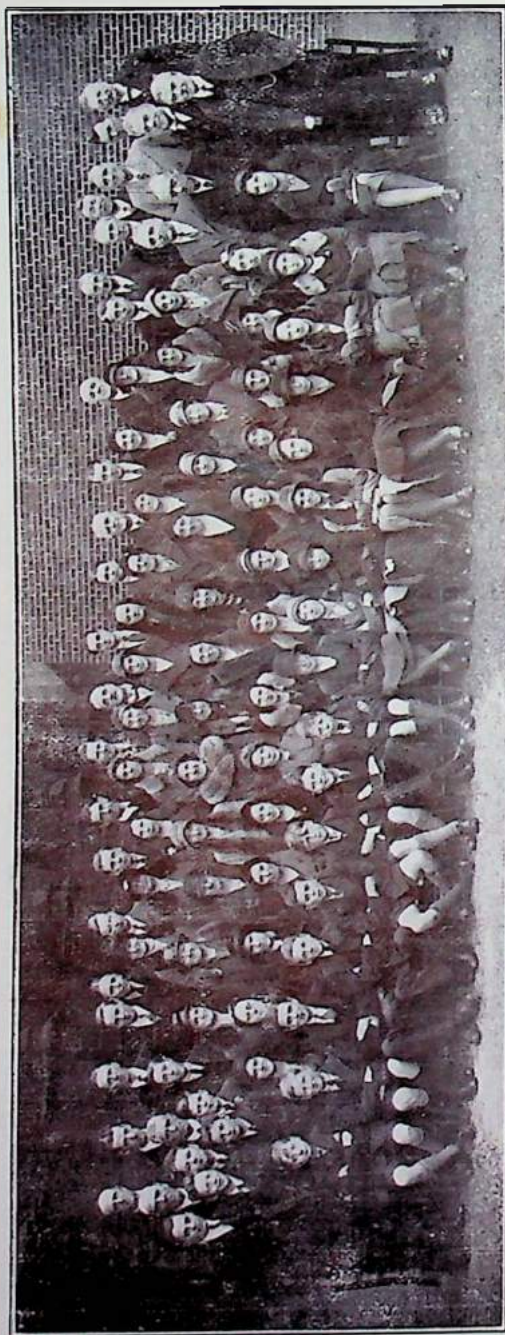
The third verse of the third hymn was sung as an appeal from the children to the congregation for a good collection!

"Friends of the poor, to You
We look with weeping eyes,
In hope compassion you will shew
And help our miseries.
What you on us bestow,
The Lord in mercy bless,
That we may His salvation know,
And endless life possess."

The congregation sang in reply:

"Children! your artless prayer
Affects the feeling mind;
And while we drop for you a tear,
To you we will be kind."

SUNDAY SCHOOL UPPER DEPT., 1933.



(Left to Right):

Back Row: E. Walls, A. Read, R. Bashforth, J. F. S. Dawson, A. Jones, R. Tickle, S. Tickle, H. Rushton, W. H. Rushton, H. Crook, G. A. Teller, J. Taylor, W. Atkinson
 Second Row: J. Gillibrand, C. Yates, E. Eagles, S. Griffiths, Mrs. Eagles, Mrs. Taylor, M. Read, B. Gillibrand, Mrs. H. Griffiths, E. Mason, M. Roberts, Mrs. Parkin, Mrs. Gillibrand, Mrs. Blacow, C. Twigg, H. Griffiths, A. W. Hesketh, S. Taylor, F. Hall
 Third Row: S. Fearn, R. H. Dawson, W. Cowan, Mrs. Bromiley, Mrs. Mason, P. James, M. Foster, Mrs. Tickle, W. H. Moorfield, E. F. Roberts, Miss Whalley, Mrs. James, Mrs. Cowan, Mrs. Mellings, B. Blacow, J. Gould, W. H. Moorfield, J. Jones, T. Jones
 Fourth Row: H. Griffiths, S. Wintersgill, F. Thomas, A. Eagles, J. Butler, P. Moorfield, E. Leyland, G. T. Dawson, A. Wall, P. James, B. Bashforth, A. Riggs, J. Prescott, M. Atkinson, M. Mellings, B. Walmesley, D. Atkinson, E. Taylor, E. Harrison, E. Park
 Front Row: B. Millard, F. Atkinson, F. Arrowsmith, F. Mason, J. Arrowsmith, D. Morris, E. Hilton, H. Naylor, F. Oxley, N. Ward, A. D. Bashforth, A. E. Dawson, K. Mellings, K. Bentley, B. Mason, M. Barton.

And then the children sang in grateful anticipation :

“ We see the falling tear,
We hear the cheering word;
And may that God who answers prayer
Your charity record.”

The fourth hymn closed with a noble Chorus of prayer:

“ Lord, let this glorious work
Be crown'd with large success;
May thousands yet unborn
This Institution bless;
Then shall Thy praise be sounded high,
Throughout a vast eternity.”

This hymn sheet had a large notice beneath the hymns:

“ Donations from Friends, who cannot attend the Sermons, will be thankfully received by Mr. Thomas Hardman, Mr. Leigh Leyland, or Mr. Thomas Walls, the Committee, or by Mr. R. Daglish, the Treasurer.”

When this Sunday School Anniversary (1812) was held Wigan was in the Leigh Circuit and had been since 1806. The year 1812 marks an interesting point in the history of Wigan Methodism for in that year Wigan separated from Leigh and has remained a separate Circuit ever since. The Superintendent of the Leigh Circuit in 1811 was Lawrence Kershaw and when Wigan at Conference in 1812 recovered its status he was appointed to Wigan. He therefore removed to Wigan and an unpublished manuscript in the Leigh Library states that the Manse furniture was also transferred to Wigan and that this caused much vexation and embarrassment to the poor Methodists in Leigh.

The names on the Sunday School Anniversary bill of 1812 are full of interest. Thomas Hardman was presumably the Superintendent of the Sunday School. He was a cotton spinner, linen and check manufacturer, whose small factory was near the place where the old L. & Y. Railway crosses Wallgate. He was a Class-leader, and Circuit Steward in 1816 and 1817 and his son, Thomas, was Superintendent of the Sunday School in 1821 and 1822. Thomas Hardman, Sen., was Mayor in 1826 and again in 1828. Mr. Leigh Leyland became a Trustee in 1808 and is the first-known Secretary of the Sunday School, in 1819. He was a warehouseman in Millgate and in later life left Methodism. Mr. R. Daglish, the Sunday School Treasurer in 1812, was of Huguenot extraction and was a noted engineer who introduced the first locomotive into the Wigan area as early as 1811. That puffing marvel was a Blenkinsop rack rail engine and was built near Darlington. It was known as “the Yorkshire horse” and was used to convey coal to the Douglas. He was the father of the Alderman Doctor, George Daglish, J.P. (born in 1806), who also became a worker in our Wigan Sunday School. A memorial tablet to Mrs. Robert Daglish in our Lamberhead Green Chapel states that she died in 1849 and ‘was a consistent and attached member’ for about 50 years. When our old Wigan Chapel was lost to the Killhamites she was one of the nine members who remained together and worshipped in a rented room.

IV.—OUR ARCHIVES.

1812—1842.

We now come to an ancient book of first importance as one of the sources for our Sunday School history. It is a large volume of 374 foolscap pages, size 15in. x 9in. It was originally used as an attendance roll and contains the names of all scholars and teachers—arranged in classes from 1813-1823. The classes were, of course, ungraded, and the ages often ran from 9 to 16 years. There were 227 scholars in 1813, and the girls' classes were thus arranged:—

15 First Alphabet Class	Elizabeth Hampson.
27 Second Alphabet Class	Betty Standish.
18 First Spelling Class	Rosannah Ainsworth.
17 Second Spelling Class	Ellen Winstanley.
32 First Testament Class	{ Jane Leyland.
	{ Betty Burns.
14 First Bible Class	Mary Bennett.

The boys' classes were similarly divided.

The average British lad is full of energy and loves to exercise his skill in throwing stones: this probably explains the fact that the first mention of the Sunday School in the Church accounts relates to a heavy bill for broken windows! The first two pages of this book are entitled "An account of *Forfeits* paid by the Superintendents and Teachers." That is an intriguing title. Did these "grave and reverend Seigniors" play forfeits? In actual fact the word forfeit means fine: each teacher had to pay one penny forfeit if absent, and was fortunate in this—for a Superintendent always paid three pence!

None of the names of the earliest scholars are known to us, but a little later we reach a list of "Rewards for Attendance," and rejoice to find George Jackson, aged four, and Ann Siddell. Both of these infants grew up and became "of note amongst the apostles."

A large section of this old book was used as a Library record for borrowed books. It is most interesting to see £5 granted to the Library in 1821. We note what books were read and we can fancy how Harry Higham and John Prest must have revelled in a charming booklet called "Dialogue of Devils." One of the librarians had a spelling system of his own which might be called the "catch-as-catch-can" style! He cheerfully gave out "The Vicker of Wakefield," "Cambil's Travils," also "Cotage Poemes," "The Mariners' Cronakle," "Dialouge Divles," and "Mishenary Anickdots."

It is possible that no Minutes of Teachers' Meetings were kept previous to 1819, for in that year the Secretary turned this large book upside down and began to write from the back page: "An Yearly Register of the Proceedings of the Methodist Sunday School, commencing August, 1819." This invaluable Minute Book begins with a Meeting on August 30th, 1819, at which a Sunday School Committee was appointed, consisting of Mr. Sugden (Superintendent of Circuit), Mr. Thomas Hardman (Sunday School Superintendent in 1812), Mr. Joseph Goodwin (Circuit Steward), Leigh Leyland (Secretary in 1812 and 1819), John

Leyland, Samuel Baldwin, (the Founder), John Sherlock (Circuit Steward, 1828), and Joseph Mercer.

This Committee appointed Joseph Mercer, who was a local schoolmaster, as *General Superintendent*, "to act discretionary every Lord's Day." Samuel Baldwin and William Yeoman were appointed 'Superintendents' to attend every Lord's Day alternately.

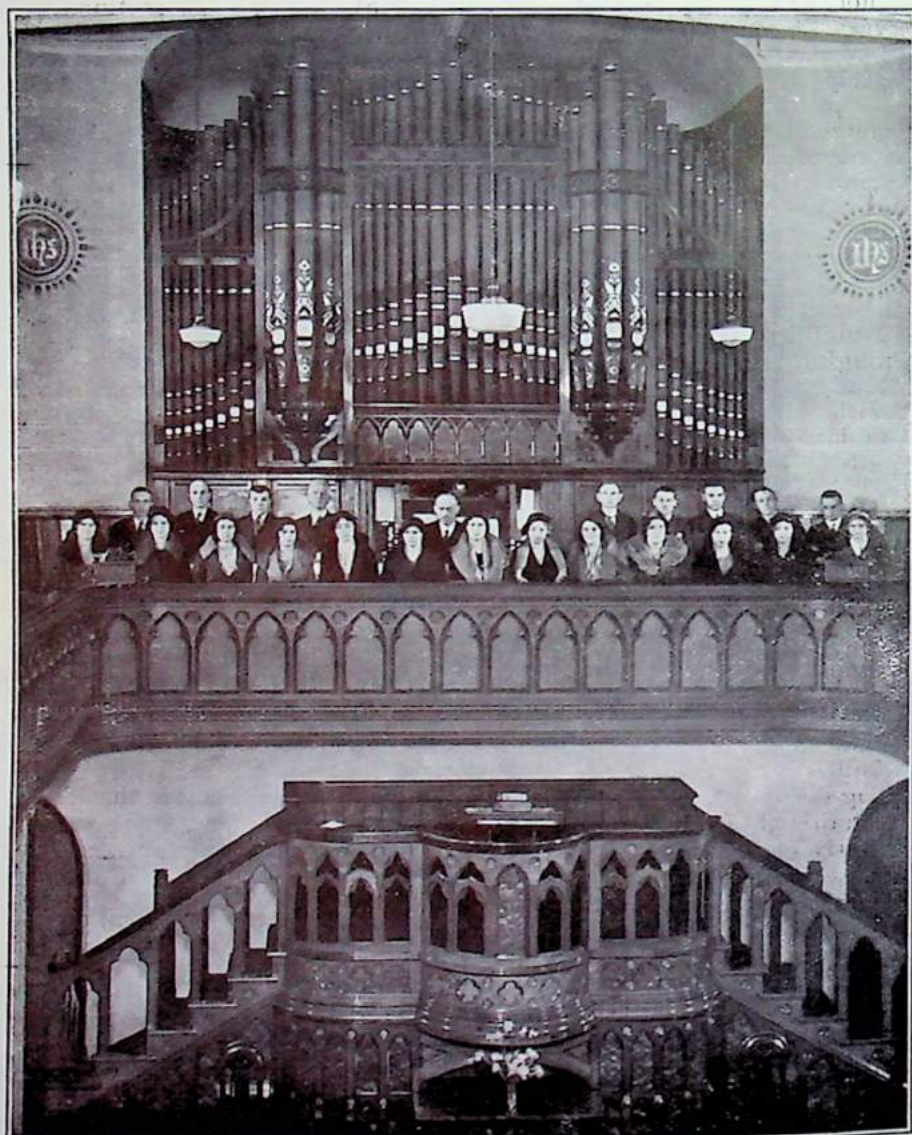
Joseph Mercer became Secretary in 1822, and in his faded handwriting we have an account of the founding in 1822 of "the Benevolent Society for the relief of Sick Children belonging to the Sunday School." Twenty years later this book closes with the Minutes of a Meeting attended by the Minister and ten of the Committee "for the purpose of investigating the case of Charles Entwistle whose parents claim relief on account of his hand being diseased." Joseph Mercer was a preacher as well as a teacher and became one of the two founders of the Independent Methodist Church in Wigan. He began about 1826 with John Fell, of Westhoughton, to hold Meetings in Broom Street, Ince (now Manchester Road), and soon a little Sunday School and Night School developed. With John Fell and five others he first leased, and later purchased, the land upon which the first Greenough Street School-Chapel was built in 1830.

It is surprising to find that our Sunday School Committee in 1819 "resolved that a general Union of all the Sunday Schools in the Circuit should be attempted." We are only aware of one in Lamberhead Green begun in 1796, and one in Aspull in 1818. The unknown schools were in either Ashton, Downall Green, Haydock, Pendlebury, or Leyland Mill.

The Napoleonic Wars caused high prices and so brought much distress to our Sunday School children since the iniquitous Corn Lawe were in force until 1815. The winter of 1811-12 was one of severe privation with great depression of trade. Many blamed the increase of machinery and cursed the power looms then coming into general use. Indignation meetings were followed by plug-drawing, loom-breaking, and mill-burnings, like that in Westhoughton in 1812. Large families were common, relief was utterly inadequate, meat and bread riots were frequent. Waterloo was a great victory but was followed by much poverty and distress when the half-famished people collected in hundreds on Amberswood Common and similar places. Wheat and bread in 1816 sold in Ince at 6d. per lb., and Lannock at 4d. In some parts those seeking relief were granted 1/6 to 2/6 per week for labour plus their food, their families being supported by the parish. Is it any wonder that our Sunday School roll fell from 307 to 150?

In Westhoughton (then within the Circuit) some of our zealous Radical members attended the famous Peterloo Meeting in Manchester in 1819, and political agitation for many years disturbed even Sunday School work. For example, John Latchford, of Hindley, "a man of good build and handsome," who was also "a good and well-dispositioned fellow," taught in our Wigan Sunday School. He became in 1830 the first Sunday School Superintendent of our Hindley School, but was put out of membership in 1840 by the Rev. Richard Smetham. Later he took part in Chartist riots in Leigh and was sent to prison for six months.

CHOIR, 1933.



(Read from Left to Right)

Back Row: F. Eagles, J. Gillibrand, H. Valentine, W. H. Moorfield,
T. Melling, F. W. Mills, N. Pye, H. Eagles, C. Yates.
Front Row: Misses P. Moorfield, B. Mason, B. Gillibrand, M. Wood,
E. Harrison, M. Varo, D. Wood, M. Harrison, B. Moorfield, M. Foster,
M. Read, M. Melling, M. Atkinson.

The first Wesleyan Missionary Society was founded in Leeds in 1813 amid the strain and stress of the Napoleonic era. Napoleon was finally overthrown at Waterloo in 1815. Industrial depression soon followed—part of the inevitable aftermath of war. But Missions had caught the imagination of our forefathers and soon, despite the prevailing depression, branches of the Missionary Society were opened up all over the country.

Two of the early Sunday School Superintendents, Thomas Hardman and William Yeomans, went specially to Liverpool in 1819 and were so impressed by the Missionary Meeting that they returned to Wigan determined to start a branch society.

Our Wigan branch of the Missionary Society is truly Victorian. It was founded on May 24th, 1819, the very day that Queen Victoria was born! The deputation to Wigan on that occasion was the Rev. Dr. Adam Clarke, the famous Commentator, and the Rev. Robert Newton, a supreme Missionary advocate. During the meeting, by a strange coincidence, a first-born son arrived in the Manse adjoining the Chapel and in consequence this babe was baptized by the curious name of J. Missionary Sugden.

In this period, the reign of George IV., our Methodist men in Sunday Schools wore knee-breeches and "slops," and women dressed in neat print bedgowns and semi-quaker bonnets. Men wore their hair short and brushed straight down over their foreheads, as a fringe. Many Methodists had a pious horror of showy dress, feathers or bright colours, and especially artificial flowers in ladies' bonnets. One girl of eleven went to a Methodist School with a few bright ribbons. An ancient worthy shook his head at this seeming worldliness and sent her father this expostulation:

IF good old Wesley now could view
And Whitfield take a squint or two
At Saints in this our day,
Met in God's house to hear His word
And sing the praises of the Lord,
My friends, what would they say?

If they could view the pious maids
In veils and lustres of all shades
And tricks and top-knots gay,
Intent on nothing but to leer
On some sweet saint who's to them dear,
My friends, what would they say?

If they could view the gay old dames
Loud-fashioned dressed in streets and lanes,
Hieing on Sabbath Day;
To Chapel a new gown to show
With silk adorned or furbelow,
My friends, what would they say?

That the Sunday School Anniversary was held in high honour is seen by such notices as this (Wigan Mirror, 1825):

" Charity Sermons "

On Sunday next, May 29th, 1825, two Charity Sermons will be preached by the Rev. Joseph Worrall, of Bolton. 2-30 and 6-30.

This letter explains itself:—

Rev. Peter Prescott to the Rev. Jas. Everett (then in Manchester):

Wigan, January 26th, 1829.

My dear Brother,

We earnestly desire that you will have the goodness to visit this Town in the month of April or May, for the purpose of preaching two Gospel Sermons on behalf of W.M.S.S. taught in this place. Services at 10½ and 6. We hope you will comply with this request, and that the bearer thereof, Thomas Hardman, Esq. (Mayor) will be able to bring an answer containing your compliance with out invitation.

Your affectionate Brother,

PETER PRESCOTT.

The famous Jas. Everett could not come. Here is the sequel:—

Late on Midsummer's Eve (June 20th), 1829, the Liverpool "Union" Coach lumbered up the rough sets of Wallgate, and finally deposited its passengers at the ancient posting establishment in Standishgate, the "Eagle and Child" (where Woolworth's now stands). The Rev. Dr. John Beecham slowly descended from the coach and enquired for the Methodist Minister's house. Soon everybody knew that he had come to preach the "Sermons"!

The Report at that Anniversary was read by William Melling, Secretary:—

"The Managers of the Sunday School are happy to inform this congregation there are upwards of 300 who regularly attend the School and receive instruction, some of whom not only learn to read the Word of God but are the subjects of Divine impressions and evince a desire to save their immortal souls.

"But it is with feelings of regret they have to state that the School is in debt to a large amount and much in want of Books and their only resource (except a few small donations) are the proceeds of the annual sermons. Under these circumstances they beg to appeal to a generous and liberal-hearted public. The amount of the Sunday School Anniversary collections in 1829 were £127s. 6d., but the expenses were £14 19s. 4d. Hence the appeal for generous giving."

Here is a copy of a very interesting Hand-bill:—

W ——— R

CORONATION, 1831.

The Mayor and the Committee for arranging the order of Procession in honor of their Majesties' Coronation, on Thursday, the 8th instant, have recommended the following order to be observed:—

SCHOOL PROCESSION

All Sunday Schools joining in the singing of the Jubilee Hymns, will assemble in their School Rooms, not later than half-past Seven o'Clock in the morning:—a flag must be forwarded from

each School into the Mesnes, and a written return of the exact number intending to join, distinguishing Boys and Girls, by Eight o'Clock:—At half-past Eight, the Schools start from their rooms, and proceed the nearest way to the Mesnes, where the two Jubilee Hymns will be sung:—At Nine o'Clock the procession will move into the Market-place, re-form, and include the schools which did not meet in the Mesnes, as follows:—

1. Adult Sunday Scholars (in advance).
2. BAND.
3. Blue Coat School.
4. Workhouse School.
5. Parish Church Girls' School.
6. Military Girls' School.
7. Military Boys' School.
8. Parish Church Boys' School.
9. School of Industry.
10. St. George's Sunday School.
11. Wesleyan Methodist Schools.
12. St. Paul's Independent Schools.
13. First Baptist Schools, Lord Street.
14. Second Baptist Schools, Commercial Hall.
15. Hope Chapel Schools.
16. Scholes Union Schools.
17. Independent Methodist Schools.
18. St. John's Catholic Schools.
19. St. Mary's Catholic Schools.

It is suggested that the scholars walk three a-breast, the tallest on the outside, and the least in the centre; the tallest girls first, and the tallest boys last, and the girls to precede the boys.

THE GRAND PROCESSION

will form in the Market-place, at Ten o'Clock in the Forenoon, with its right in front of the Town Hall.

At Eleven o'Clock precisely, the procession will move in the following order:—

Firemen,
 Advance of Yeomanry,
 Military Band,
 Sergeants, &c.,
 MAYOR,
 Committee and Gentlemen of the Town
 and Neighbourhood,
 Infantry.
 —
 TRADES,
 Pensioners,
 FREEMASONS,
 United Order of Oddfellows.

ORANGEMEN.

Amicable Society (Dog and Partridge),
Saint John's Society,
Union Society,
Hibernian Societies,
Amicable Society (Legs of Man),
Scholes Penny Society,
Other Societies.

BAND.

Independent Society of Oddfellows,
Rear Guard of Yeomanry.

The Route will be through Wallgate Street, Queen Street, Chapel Lane, Scholes, Hardy-buts, Wellington Street, Millgate, Standishgate, Wigan Lane, to Freckleton, Market-place.

The Mayor and Committee recommend a General Holiday to be kept, in honor of their Gracious Majesties, and they particularly request that no Flags or Banners, having any political device, appear on this occasion, as it might tend to disturb the general festivity of the day.

WIGAN, Sept. 6th, 1831.

J. HILTON, Printer.

V.—SOME EARLY WORKERS.

WILLIAM YEOMANS.

William Yeomans, who was appointed Co-Superintendent with Samuel Baldwin in 1819, was one of God's great gifts. He came from Derby when aged about 26, and for over forty years lived a radiant life in Wigan. He was first a baker in Scholes and later opened a grocer's shop in Wallgate "hard by the Synagogue." He served the school in every office and was for fifteen years its chief overseer. He lived through many stormy days of Methodist dissension, but in great serenity adorned the doctrine of the Prince of Peace. His tombstone relates that he "died happy in the Lord" near Christmas Day in 1859.

JOHN and THOMAS WOOSNAM.

John Woosnam, son of a Shropshire farmer, came to Wigan to the Victoria Hotel in the humble capacity of "Boots." In due course he moved with the licensees to the Buck-i'-th'-Vine (Clarence Hotel) in the same capacity. What a great day it was for him, and for many when God lifted him from behind the bar of the Buck-i'-th'-Vine and installed him as a teacher in the Sunday School of the same name.

John had all the qualities needful to make a wealthy publican, but like St. Matthew, a publican of another sort, he "left all and followed Him."

" I heard Him call, ' Come, follow, ' that was all,
My gold grew dim, my soul went after Him,
I rose and followed that was all,
Who would not follow if he heard Him call?"

John Woosnam actually lost nothing and gained everything. In later life the mantle of Wm. Yeomans fell upon him and he succeeded Yeomans both as Leader of his Society Class and in his grocer's business. His younger brother, Thomas, followed him both to the bar of the Buck-i'-th'-Vine and to the Sunday School.

The promise " to children and children's children " has been amply fulfilled in the case of the Woosnams.

WILLIAM WILLAN.

This son of a Methodist builder was born in Wigan and bred in Lamberhead Green. Converted at the age of 16, he entered a lawyer's office, and at length became our Sunday School librarian in 1837. In the following year he entered College and in 1839 the Ministry. He thus followed in the footsteps of Fearnley and Atherton, and was succeeded by the two Posnetts, the two Solomons, George Boggis, and several others, for example.

THEOPHILUS GREGORY.

This notable candidate worked in Meeks' at Wallgate, and afterwards with Meeks' in Deansgate, Manchester. About this time a batch of 45 of his fellow assistants sat together in our Church and so many of these were budding preachers that their shop was familiarly known as " little Didsbury." G. and J. Meek had purchased an ancient inn, " The Bear's Paw," which contained Wigan's most noted cockpit, and it was this site which was transformed into a Methodist Seminary. When Theophilus Gregory entered the ministry in 1850 he was preparing the way for his three sons and two grandsons. And thus in forwarding this candidature our Sunday School was providing future ministers by the half-dozen. Four of this fine Levitical family are still in the active work of our ministry.

WILLIAM ALTHAM.

William Altham, of Clitheroe, was born in 1809 and as a youth was apprenticed to Luke Smalley, a tallow chandler in Standishgate. Passing one night along Wallgate he heard music and singing and was drawn into our Chapel. Soon he was invited to come with his violin into " the fiddlers' pew." Shortly after his conversion he became a Sunday School Secretary, and later everything else! At the suggestion of Dr. Jabez Bunting he, aided by the Meeks and others, took a prominent part in building the beautiful Sanctuary in Standishgate.

TIMOTHY COOP.

Of all the early Wigan Methodists connected with our Sunday School, Coop is perhaps the only one whose biography has been published. His father, a weaver, was Sunday School Superintendent in Westhoughton and so when Timothy began his business life in Wigan in 1835 he joined our Sunday School. He

SOME OF THE MEEK FAMILY.



Joseph Meek.
W. O. Meek.

Rev. Joseph Meek.
Mrs. J. Meek.
Mrs. W. O. Meek.

Mrs. Meek.
George Meek (Sen.)
George Meek (Jun.).

also became librarian and took a very active part in all the work of the Sunday School. In his day the Band of Hope Movement had but recently begun, in Preston in 1832, and Temperance work was in its infancy. He reports that in early days the teachers in Westhoughton (then in the Circuit) were unduly fond of what was called "Methodist cream," a blend of rum and milk! Coop did much to forward every good movement, and was a generous giver. How his active spirit chafed at the long delay in starting to build new premises. He afterwards left Methodism, and founded a Mission in School Street which ultimately developed into the Rodney Street Church.

The original Vestry of 1775, in which the Sunday School was begun in 1783, was but a tiny place and possibly of but one storey. It was rebuilt, apparently in 1811, of greater length and with two storeys. Six years later it was arranged to sell the whole site and buildings to the Congregationalists. But the transaction could not be completed, probably because the original Deed was lost. The Hope Street friends then built their first premises in 1818 and enlarged them two years later. In 1834 the Sunday School Committee decided to build a Sunday School of three storeys on the site of the original Vestry and adjoining ground, but no money was raised until 1839. In those early days Schools had to be satisfied with the best accommodation which they could find. A Sunday School in Newton-le-Willows was held in the old cockpit of the village, the amphitheatrical seats and other arrangements all remaining as in their palmy days!

Early in January, 1839, William Yeomans announced to the children a week prior to the distribution of the surplus funds of the Sick Society that it was intended to build a new School. He requested them to inform their parents so that on the day of the distribution those who were willing might give their share to the new School. In response, 55 of the scholars gave in their tickets, value 10d. each, a total value of £2 5s. 10d., to start a Building Fund for a new School, in the Wigan Savings Bank. Through the kindness of that Bank, we have been supplied with this copy of that old account:

	£	s.	d.
1839			
July 8—Deposit	2	5	10
Nov. 1—Interest	0	0	4
1840.			
Feb. 17—Deposit	2	16	8
Apr. 20—Deposit	2	12	11
Nov. 1—Interest	0	3	6
	<hr/>		
	£7	19	3

Notice the generosity of each of those 55 children, who resembled her who paid into the treasury "all that she had." These scholars were mostly poor, had never any luxuries, and wore only the cheapest clothing. Boys wore fustian jackets, caps, and breeches; girls wore pink frocks, clean white aprons (if able to afford these), and soft bonnets. To those children a stick of slate pencil was a positive treasure, a black-lead made any lad the envy

of his pals, and a paper note-book was still more precious. The fund, you will notice, was repaid by the Bank a few weeks before Standishgate was opened in 1845.

The Sunday School Anniversary Collections from 1841 to 1845 were £10 0s. 4d., £10 0s. 6d., £10 1s. 0d., £11 8s. 11d., and £13 0s. 2d. Only Ten pounds to Thirteen pounds per annum! But here is "something more than meets the eye." Those were "the hungry forties," when homes were destitute through the cotton famine. Children frequently did not return home from work or school because there was no dinner. Mothers made bran dumplings, and butter, sugar, and flour were often sold in 'happorths.' Is it surprising that the cholera epidemic soon raged in Wigan?

The insanitary condition of the town was then appalling. A Medical Inspector's report states, for example, that Barrack Yard (behind the present Midland Bank), off Wallgate, had 45 small cottages, with floors below the level of the streets, no thoroughfare though the Yard, no water supply, and only four closets. Great George Street, Clayton Street, and the Pottery, being low, undrained, and filthy, were seats of fever, and our scholars were drawn from all of these poor areas.

VI.—A NEW FOUNDATION.

"And all the people shouted with a great shout . . . because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid."—Ezra 3—11.

This happiness of the children of Jerusalem was repeated in Wigan on August 14th, 1844, at the Stone-laying in Standishgate. The Mayor of Liverpool had come to preside and the gathered youth of the Church greeted the coming day with a resounding cheer. Many ministers took part (including the Rev. Joseph Meek) and the inspiration of the day was great. With what eagerness the children watched whilst the Rev. Fred Payne, a chief promoter of the building, placed in a cavity of the foundation stone a bottle hermetically sealed, containing a written parchment. All wondered what had been written. Here it is:

"The foundation stone of this Wesleyan Methodist Chapel was laid by Thomas Sands, Esq., Mayor of Liverpool, August 14th, 1844, in the 8th year of the reign of our most gracious Sovereign, Queen Victoria, and during the sittings in Birmingham of the 101st Annual Wesleyan Conference.

Rev. Jabez Bunting, D.D., President.
Rev. Robert Newton, D.D., Secretary.
Rev. Wm. Constable and
Rev. Frederick Payne, Ministers.

Trustees: Wm. Altham, George Beswick, Wm. Brown, Rd. Christopher, Wm. Holt, Wm. Melling, Sen., Wm. Melling, Jun., James Martin, Thomas Howarth, Geo. Meek, Joseph Meek, John Meek, Robert Meek, Frederick Payne, Wm. Yeomans,
Rev. Leonard Posnett and Rev. James S. Thomas,
Ministers newly appointed to the Circuit.

Jabez Hanson, Architect; Job Hanson, Builder, and
Robt. Hanson, Clerk of the Works—all of New-
bury, Berkshire.

Dedicated to the Triune Jehovah,
Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.
"Ebenezer."

A Tea Meeting had been planned in the old Chapel, but owing to the damage done to its roof, that morning, by an explosion in a neighbouring coal-pit, that meeting was held in the Royal Hotel. Some regarded this damage to the roof as a significant hint that the time had come to quit the building.



STANDISHGATE CHURCH.

(By courtesy of Messrs. J. Starr & Sons.)

THE NEW CHURCH AND SCHOOL-ROOMS.

*"This is none other than the house of God, and this is
the gate of Heaven."*—Gen. 28: 17.

On Wednesday, June 25th. 1845, the children marched in triumph from the Buck-i'-th'-Vine to the Opening in Standishgate. Before entering they sang an anthem—

"I was glad when they said unto me
let us go into the house of the Lord."

The Rev. Wm. Atherton Opened "the Church and School-Rooms" by Services at 11 a.m. and 6-30 p.m. No less than 16 Special Sermons were preached in connection with this great event. The distinguished preachers included Dr. Bunting, Dr. Flannah, Dr. Newton, Dr. Beaumont, Dr. Thos. Raffles (Congregationalist), and Rev. G. B. McDonald (grandfather of Stanley Baldwin, for-

merly Prime Minister). At these 16 Services the total collections were £763 19s. 1d. Our fathers did know how to give!

We can picture the wonder and delight of the children who thronged the galleries on the Opening Day as they gazed upon the glory of their new spiritual home. It was indeed a beautiful House of God. The sacred historian rejoiced to give the names of Hiram and of the other great artificers who built the Temple, and describes their work, the pillars, their bases, and their capitals. And surely the families of William Brown, Abraham Siddell, Wm. Melling, Sen., and Wm. Melling, Jun., must have specially rejoiced to gaze upon the windows and all the handsome ironwork wrought by those men as a labour of love in the old Haigh Foundry.

The Rev. W. H. Lax, of Poplar, once Mayor of that London Borough, begins his "Lax of Poplar" with a fine enquiry, "How far back does God begin in the working out of His purposes?" God's purposes of grace for Mr. Lax were seen in the conversion of his father in Standishgate at Peter Mackenzie's Mission in 1857. But God's purpose of grace began much earlier and I love to record that it was his grandfather, Samuel Lax, the Methodist ironfounder, who superintended the casting of the chastely fluted pillars and bracketed capitals of that same Church. With what rapture these gallant men and other workers "unknown and yet well known" looked round upon their work then rose to sing

*"Not the labours of my hands
Can fulfil Thy law's demands;
Could my zeal no respite know,
Could my tears for ever flow,
All for sin could not atone;
Thou must save, and Thou alone."*

This fine enterprise of 1845 had one serious defect: the "school rooms" were wholly inadequate. Hence the Sunday School remained in the old Chapel until 1847, and might have repaired the premises and remained longer had not the site been required by the Railway Company which was then constructing the line to Southport. The scholars lost their school but found by taking an early trip to Southport in 1852 that a railway had some redeeming features.

Mr. Yeomans, who had been Superintendent from 1835, took the pupils across to Standishgate to the schoolrooms of two stories. The school was reorganised under three Superintendents: Upper Room Boys, Wm. Yeomans; Lower Room Girls, Wm. Melling; Chapel, Infants, Thomas Taylor, who was followed by Henry Farr in 1854.

These are some early Anniversary figures:

1846	Feb. 1	...	£31 16	4	Rev. John Hannah, D.D.
1847	" 1	...	31 1	5	Rev. John Hannah, D.D.
1848	" 13	...	41 8	6	Rev. Robt. Inglis.
1849	" 11	...	45 0	3	Rev. W. L. Thornton, M.A.
1850	" 17	...	35 5	1	Rev. Geo. Dickenson.
1851	May 25	...	46 17	6	Rev. Nehemiah Curnock, Sen.
1852	June 20	...	37 7	3	Rev. Nehemiah Curnock, Sen.
1853	May 22	...	27 12	8	Rev. James Grose.
1854	Apr. 23	...	36 12	8	Rev. Joseph Roberts (Stockport)
1855	Apr. 1	...	34 0	7	Rev. J. S. Workman.

The Report of 1856 states that the school had then 418 boys and 485 girls, and of these pupils 488 were able to read.

The Anniversary that year was conducted by Dr. Gervasse Smith, the father of Sir Clarence Smith, High Sheriff of London.

William Melling, like William Altham, was born in 1809—the same year as Abraham Lincoln, Charles Darwin, and Alfred Tennyson. His parents were not Methodists, but William joined our Sunday School, and soon became a Methodist by choice and by conviction. He served an apprenticeship to the Rylands firm of textile fame, which had begun business in Wigan, but later threw in his lot with the Haigh Foundry. In that foundry was another Methodist, also a William Melling, a Samson in size and strength, so he was called Big William, or William Senior, the other as Little William, or William Junior. It is William Junior of whom we are now writing. He was Secretary of the old Sunday School for most of the 20 years from 1828 to 1848. He then became one of the three Superintendents and worked with characteristic energy of heart and will until 1856. From 1825 there was some strife in Standishgate, and on Sunday, 28th September, 1856, trouble held in suspense suddenly precipitated.



WILLIAM MELLING.

The "Wigan Observer" of October 4th, 1856, in a brief note on "The Rupture at the Wesleyan School," explains that on that fateful morning (September 28th), admission to the school was refused "to a number of the most active teachers, who during the past week had been deposed from their offices as superintendents, secretaries, etc. The children came to school as usual to find their teachers in the street. . . a large crowd collected in the street, a hymn was sung, the teachers announced that they were going to the Public Hall, and a procession of from 300 to 400 teachers and scholars followed their superintendents and secretaries." One need not rake among the ashes of long forgotten controversies—"the old, unhappy, far-off things and battles long ago." All the protagonists have long since died and their children are now happily re-united in one Methodist family.

William Melling led the procession that morning, with Thomas Taylor, Peter F. Rawson, Amos Jacques, Wm. Fogg, and Hiram Taylor. Amongst the scholars who followed were Mr. Melling's children, including Thomas (19) and John (17), who were already Sunday School workers, and Samuel, a lad of 10. How many others in the Wigan district still remember that eventful day?

RECOVERY AND PROGRESS.

"O Lord, revive Thy work in the midst of the years."

The School which had suddenly tobogganed from the Delectable Mountains of 1845 into the Valley of Humiliation in

SOME SUNDAY SCHOOL WORKERS.



Iabez Boggs,
Thomas Melling,
John Dainty.

George Jackson,
John Melling,
Catharine White.

Samuel H. Lax,
Samuel Melling, J.P.,
John H. Royle.

1856, began slowly to retrace its steps. Henry Farr became Superintendent; William Jackson, J. Cordeaux, and A. E. Lloyd were amongst the old guard who kept the flag still flying. The Anniversaries regained their popularity and their finance and by 1864, when the *Centenary of Wesley's first visit to Wigan* was celebrated, the old Sunday School had made a fair recovery and had established a branch school in Burns Yard, Scholes. That Centenary was a *four days' Celebration* and our own teachers, then numbering 52, and scholars, 490, were escorted in a triumphal procession by a scholars' drum and life band (from Aspull). A debt on seven Chapels and four Schools totalled then £3,186 13s. 0½d. Great gifts were offered and arrangements made so that the debt was cleared off to the uttermost farthing!

It is interesting to note that in that Wesley Centenary year, 1864, the Sunday School superintendents of the Methodist Free Church were Amos Jacques and Samuel Melling. In 1865 A. E. Lloyd became co-superintendent with W. O. Meek, his future son-in-law. Lloyd had a chemical works in Standish Lower Ground, but shortly afterwards moved to Manchester. He entered into Civic life, and was Lord Mayor of Manchester in 1894-5-6. He was then a widower, and his daughter, who had married Dr. W. O. Meek, then practicing in Manchester, acted as Mayoress during her father's two years of office. It will be noticed that she is wearing the golden Chain of the Lady Mayoress in her photograph.

THE BURNS' YARD BRANCH SUNDAY SCHOOL.

As early as 1863 George Jackson, Thomas Hall and Enoch H. Monks began a branch Sunday School in Scholes, and were much encouraged by the celebrated Isaac Marsden. In 1864 it was arranged that these scholars should sit in Service in Standishgate. In 1867 their barn in Burns' Yard was outbrowed and the plans of C. B. Holmes were accepted for building a preaching place and school in Schofield Lane. But "the best laid schemes o' mice and men gang aft agley" and it was finally resolved that the Burns' Yard Sunday School should remove to Diceconson Street (Standishgate) and that the money collected to build a school should be returned to the subscribers.

ISAAC MARSDEN.

Isaac Marsden, a notable character, was the favourite Sunday School preacher at Burns' Yard. From his home in Doncaster he travelled in a gig as a woollen draper over the North and Midlands, but his real calling was that of a free-lance evangelist. He had a thrilling experience in Wigan. Preaching beneath "the big lamp" in the Old Market Place he was assailed by a hostile crowd, but protected by the stalwart labourers of a friendly railroad contractor, he delivered his soul like him who "fought with wild beasts at Ephesus." He visited Nottingham, and wrote: "A young person the name of Booth was that night convicted and decided for God." That 'young person' ultimately became General William Booth of the Salvation Army!

It is now of great interest to notice the first appearance in our Records of the names of families which for many years have borne the burden and heat of the day. For example, in 1866 Thomas Holker came to Wigan, Thomas Dawson, of Leek, and Oates and George Rushton, of Bingley. Seldom is any Sunday School enriched by four such men in a single year. To Oates Rushton fell the honour of being the Superintendent during the great Centenary observed by the School in 1883. Thomas Dawson and his wife began in 1882 to co-operate with Mr. and Mrs. Fearn and especially with William Harrison and A. Critchley in a tiny branch Sunday School. This was the acorn from which has grown that oak known as the Queen's Hall Mission. Harrison started in his own front room at 25, Scholes Lane, then moved to a loft in Clifton's Yard. At length, in 1891, a "wood cabin" was opened and ten years later this Mission hived off on Sundays to the Hippodrome but buzzed back to the old hive in Scholes for week-night nectar.

Calder, a splendid lay evangelist, worked mightily, and the Hippodrome became the nucleus for the Mission at Queen's Hall. Dr. Henry Pope, Home Mission Secretary, with Thomas Walker, of Bolton, and Samuel Melling, J.P., as Treasurers, soon launched a scheme. The Wigan Mission was constituted in 1904 and its doors were opened in 1907. The Queen's Hall Sunday School, one of the largest in Wigan, is but one of many daughters of our Mother School.

THE "RAGGED" SCHOOL.

The Sunday School had, during this same period, another branch, commonly called "The Ragged School." In 1885 Samuel Melling and John H. Royle were appointed Superintendents of a venture in the Lower Lecture Room for "gathering children who go to no Sabbath School." Some ten years later S. Fearn was appointed by the Council "to aid John Jones in this work with which all sympathise." The School was helped by many, and whilst C. W. J. Parry wrought in Scholes, Finlay Mackenzie wrought in this Ragged School, and both with H. H. Burdess, a worker in the Young Men's Class, were accepted for the Ministry in 1903. A great and wise step was taken by the Sunday School when in January, 1908, a Primary Department was formed and thus finally the Ragged School was "merged into the Large and Infants' School."

On every page of the Sunday School Minutes some point arises upon which we would gladly linger, but we must now skim over the pages like a swallow in speedy and erratic flight. We can but glance around and wonder at the wealth of these teeming years.

Here in January, 1867, is a proposal that a Band of Hope be formed: moved by George Meek, seconded by A. E. Lloyd (afterwards of Manchester), that "no scholar under the age of 14 be allowed to sign the pledge without his or her parents' consent." The Band of Hope soon lapsed and was re-formed in 1879. It again lapsed, and was again restored in 1908. Again it disappeared, to

rise again in 1922. The shadow of a coming Dramatic Society soon appeared upon the far horizon. In September, 1869, some of the teachers and scholars asked permission to read the drama of *Joseph* at the "Wigan Fair" tea party and so a sub-committee was formed "to hear if the party are fit to act it." We are left wondering! At another "Fair" tea party a lad appeared on the platform with his face blackened and began to sing "A 'orrible Tale." He never finished—for the chairman decided it *was* 'orrible and promptly applied the closure!

In 1872 it was moved by John Pope, a zealous and deeply spiritual 'local' (who introduced the S.A. into Wigan), "that in future the first Sunday in May be fixed for our School Sermon." Mr. Lowe proposed "that Mr. Geo. Meek take the chair at a lecture by Mr. Chambers, and for the honour to pay the sum of five pounds." We know from another source that Mr. Meek was a dashing young man who always carried gold loose in his pockets! He later became a Swedenborgian Minister and his widow still resides in Southport. In 1874 R. H. Meek, son of Robert Meek, trustee, became librarian and one rejoices that he still retains good health in Macclesfield.

In 1873 James Gobin, a local preacher, died leaving two-thirds of his books to the Wigan Sunday School and one-third to Newtown. On October 6th, 1874, the scholars—with the girls arrayed in white—crowded into Standishgate to the Thanksgiving for the clearing of another batch of debts, a total of £1,072! This great relief prepared the way for the permanent appointment of a *third* minister to the Wigan Circuit.

In 1880 the average *attendance* for the year was 147.2 scholars, an increase of 28. George Jackson became Secretary in 1881 and in 1882 we read of a good increase of scholars and a general improvement in the school.

In 1883 a small Sunday School Hymnbook was given to each pupil and was thus inscribed:

Presented to
A—————B—————,
A Scholar in this School. In memory of
its One Hundreth Anniversary.

O. Rushton, Superintendent,
J. Boggis, W. Cordeau, Secretaries,
Revd. J. Bacon, Superintendent Minister.

In that same year George Jackson was General Secretary; John Cordeau was Librarian; Miss Cordeau was a Teacher, and Miss Rawlinson, who served for 43 years. Another teacher was Miss Jackson, who became Mrs. Dickinson, of Coppull, and who is now again in Standishgate. She is the daughter of George Jackson and granddaughter of William Jackson, born in 1806, who was a scholar and a worker in the oldest Sunday School in Wigan.

Medals had been already presented in the January of that year and special books to scholars "never absent and never late." A scheme was launched to raise £500 for some additional classrooms, new lighting system, and other improvements to Church and Schools. Mr. Wainwright, headmaster of the Day School, took

a generous hand in all these undertakings and gave a donation of one hundred pounds.

The Literary Association, which began in 1872, blossomed out some ten years later into the Mutual Improvement Society. The interest of its life probably reached its climax in 1908 in a great Public Debate on "Socialism," between six speakers representing the local I.L.P. and the Literary Society. The Rt. Hon. Stephen Walsh, P.C., D.L., J.P., M.P. for Ince, was an interested listener upon the platform, supporting the Chairman, Mr. Boggis, President of the Society.

On November 20th, 1898, Mr. V. G. Hodson wrote this report: "Visited this delightful school and Mr. Boggis' Class. Thank God for all I saw and what I heard. What potentialities are in the School.

The Memorial Tablet to Jabez Boggis states that he was "for upwards of 30 years the honoured president of Wesley Hall Bible Class. Mrs. Boggis, like Mrs. Joseph Smith, Mrs. Knight, and scores of others, was a mother in Israel and in her Sunday School.

The memory of Jabez Boggis is still fragrant. The Rev. H. H. Burdess, M.A., B.D., now Superintendent of our work in Italy, writes of Mr. Boggis: "A charming leader, full of tact, with a feeling for a good phrase; he encouraged me greatly and for some years followed me up with notes which shewed his great interest in events in my little career. We used to have exciting debates (which he quietly kept within bounds), and in those days one young man was Alstead, who afterwards flourished in local government and even got to the House of Commons." Mr. Burdess, who had come as a mining engineer from the Forest of Dean, continues in a letter: "The fact is I can always thank Wigan for the great thing it did in my life. I was fairly well set upon another career in which I had good prospects, but the generous reception, the hearty friendliness, and above all the lively Methodism and the eager welcome it gave to my youthful efforts as a preacher, went straight to my heart and constituted such a clear call to the Ministry that I left all and followed. Lots of those friends must now be dead, but a few will remember and I should like my little tribute to be worked in somewhere in the history at the 150th Anniversary."

In 1894 G. A. Telfer first became Superintendent with Henry Farr. He had, however, joined the school soon after his arrival in 1884, and so his actual term of service is nearly fifty years—not out! R. Tickle, who joined him in office in 1911, rejoined him in 1928 and now shares with him the honour of Superintendency in this great year of the Ter-Jubilee, with J. Gillibrand as General Secretary.

F. R. Dawson, J.P., and his nephew, R. H. Dawson, became Superintendents in 1914; W. H. Rushton and W. H. Moorfield in 1922; C. Yates and S. H. Moorfield, M.Sc., in 1926.

In conclusion, our Church for 88 years has been engaged in *Day School* and in order to include a brief record of the *Day School* this chapter must now end. In the history of the Wigan Wesley Circuit and of its school there is a mine of unworked gold—a wealth of information and inspiration—which it is hoped may gradually be converted into current coin.

PEMBERTON GIRL'S ROMANTIC CAREER.

FROM PIT BROW LASSIE TO LADY DOCTOR.



(By kind permission of the "Wigan Observer.")

Dr. MARY TOMLINSON, M.B., Ch.B.

Our "Living Link" with India

"The Times," of September 19, 1930, contained this notice:—

CAREER OF WOMAN MEDICAL MISSIONARY.

Dr. Mary Tomlinson, M.B., Ch.B., is sailing from England to-day to take up medical missionary work at Madras, India. She will work under the supervision of the Womens' Department of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society. Dr. Tomlinson, who was educated at an elementary school, worked as a weaving-shed hand at a Wigan mill and then at the pit-head at the Pemberton Collieries, Wigan. At the age of 20 she decided to enter the nursing profession, and worked at a Walsall children's hospital, and later at Ancoats Hospital, Manchester. Thence she proceeded to Birmingham University, where she graduated M.B., Ch.B., at the Christmas examinations last year. After being for six months house surgeon at the Birmingham Children's Hospital, Dr. Tomlinson volunteered for work at Madras.

Dr. Tomlinson was a scholar in our Goose Green School, one of the earliest branches of the Buck-i'-th'-Vine Sunday School.

A BRIEF RECORD
OF THE
Wesleyan Day Schools,
WIGAN,
1845-1933.

I.—The Origin.

II.—The Management.

III.—The Educational Record.

THE WESLEYAN DAY SCHOOL.

Acknowledgments.

What are the sources of our information? They are chiefly the School Records, especially the Log Books, Managers' Minutes, and some Circuit papers. Some additional material has been furnished by the Wesleyan Education Office, through the kindness of Dr. Harrison, Principal of Westminster College. Another source of information has been "the Minutes of the Committee of Council on Education," which preceded the Board of Education. These annual reports are possessed by the Manchester Reference Library, from the first issue in 1839 to 1928, and our indebtedness to the Public Libraries in Wigan and in Manchester is considerable. Further aid has been given by many friends, and the Editor confesses that he "has gathered gear by every wile that justified by honour."

The compiler is also grateful to many who have kindly secured the photographs which illustrate the text, but his chief debt of gratitude is to one who prefers to remain anonymous.

The Wesleyan Day School

1845—1933.

IN 1816 the House of Commons found "that a very large number of children were wholly without means of instruction." Similarly, the Rev. B. Powell, Vicar of St. George's, Wigan, in preaching in 1818 said "From my notes taken at the last Confirmation I find that a very large proportion of the rising generation is wholly unable to read, the proportion is rather more than one-third, the numbers were 95 to 275." Such scanty educational provision as then existed was wholly voluntary and very few poor children spent more than two or three years at school. Despite their heroic efforts the Sunday Schools could not cope with the needs of the myriads of untaught children. One of the early acts of the Reform Parliament was a Vote of £20,000 for school houses. That was in 1833, exactly 100 years ago. A Standard History states that "A Commission in 1840 found people who had never heard of London, or of America, of Jesus Christ, or of God except in an oath, and it is reckoned that, of boys and girls of 13 or 14, half could not read and nearly three-quarters could not write."

The Wesleyan Conference of 1836, awake to the needs of the age, appointed William Atherton, of Lamberhead Green, and two others to report on "our Sunday and other Schools." In consequence, the Connexional Education Committee was established in 1838, and Conference in 1841 urged "that all possible care and effort should be used in each District to promote the foundation and success of weekday and infant schools." Methodism prospered rapidly and in 1843 John Scott, President of Conference, proposed a scheme for seven hundred new Day Schools within seven years, and the greater part of this scheme was carried into effect! "There were giants in the land in those days." This great expansion was inspired and supported by a growing desire among Methodist parents, fostered by the Wesleyan Education Committee at Westminster, for better education—a desire still characteristic of Methodist parents.

The famous Matthew Arnold, H.M. Inspector of Schools, son of Dr. Thomas Arnold, the great Headmaster of Rugby, in his "General Report on Schools" for 1852, remarks:—

"On the whole the Wesleyan Schools which I have seen must be considered as existing for the sake of the children of tradesmen, of farmers, and of mechanics of the higher class."

School attendance was then entirely voluntary and usually ceased at the age of 11 or earlier, but referring to the Wesleyan Schools of those days, the recent Hadow Report (1926) on "The Education of the Adolescent" states:—

"These parents were prepared to keep their children longer at school. A considerable number of the pupils remained after the age of eleven, and in addition to reading, writing, ciphering and Scripture lessons, received instruction in English grammar, geography, history, elementary science, hygiene, and singing. Some of the Wesleyan Schools in rural areas had an agricultural bias with lessons in mensuration, land surveying, book-keeping, and agriculture. In the same way,

THE DAY SCHOOL.



some of the Wesleyan Urban Schools had a slight commercial bent."

Matthew Arnold, in his report of 1856, commends the activity of the Wesleyan Education Committee, and remarks: "So long as the present denominational system of schools shall continue in force, there is no school system to which I wish success more sincerely than to theirs."

The Wigan Circuit has played a worthy part in this National Education. The first step was taken in the last Quarterly meeting held in the vestry of the old Chapel in Buck-i'th-Vine Yard, on 31st March, 1845. The Rev. L. Posnett presided: there were present, Messrs. Joseph Meek, W. Altham, W. Melling, T. Howarth, W. Yeomans, and W. Brown, and it was resolved "that a Wesleyan Day School be established in Wigan." On 16th November, 1845, a collection was made "towards the expenses of outfit for the Day School" and amounted to Twenty pounds and three pence.

The School had a humble beginning and was literally an Infant school. It began in 1845 in the vestries and other rooms of the new Chapel which was opened in Standishgate on 23rd June, 1845.

Ann H. Siddell, a young Methodist cotton operative, lost a hand in a machine accident and in order to help her she was engaged as our first Teacher. She taught from 1848 to 1857, then through the kindly aid of Mr. William Melling, J.P., and others she was sent for training to Westminster College. She resumed school work in 1858, and H.M. Inspector in 1862 wrote that she "has been employed for the last 16 years and has done well under many disadvantages." Miss Siddell's Infant School was visited on 3rd June, 1867, by the Rev. G. W. Olver, B.A., father of our present Superintendent, and through him we have a living link with our Foundress. In 1869 Miss Siddell opened a private Day School in Greenough Street, in premises lent free by the Independent Methodists. Her full period in connection with the two Methodist Churches was 30 years: 1845—1881. No photograph of Miss Siddell can be traced by her relatives but the pioneer work of this one-handed teacher deserved our grateful recognition.

Amongst Miss Siddell's pupils in this "prehistoric" school (existing before the present schools were opened in 1856) were three from Hindley. They were Martha, Thomas and John Royle, who walked each day three miles from Hindley as in those days there was neither tram nor bus. Martha became a pupil teacher and followed Miss Siddell to Westminster College in 1862. Another pupil who walked from his home in Brockmill Lane was Samuel Melling, son of Mr. William Melling, J.P., then of the Haigh Foundry. Samuel left about 1854 for a private school in Hallgate, where Mr. Henry Lamb made this Report of him: "A good little pupil and I hope that something may be made of him D.V." That hope has been fulfilled, Mr. Samuel Melling became a Justice of the Peace nearly fifty years ago (1885), and is now our Senior Borough Magistrate.

The school prospered and quickly outgrew the accommodation. In 1850 the management resolved to build new premises, to reorganise the school, and to secure Government recognition and assistance.

DAY SCHOOL JUNIOR DEPT. "A"—Group 1.



First Row—(Girls): Gladys Pickup, Margaret Santus, Barbara Wilding, Mary Brounkey, Sybil Kershaw, Yvonne Greenhalgh, Dorothy Ackerley, Betty Seddon. **(Boys):** Frank Thompson, Kevin Foster, Paul Wilding, Allan Ricketts, Norman Kay, Albert Leigh, Russell Jones, Alfred Gorman, Richard Harris, John Greenwood.
Second Row—(Girls): Minnie Kelly, Winifred Bannister, Ruth Moss, Margery Miller, Audrey Winter, Dorothy Henry, Vera Sutton, Iris Jones, Vera Fletcher, Annie Seddon, Patricia Mills, Agnes Harrison, Molly Humphries. **(Boys):** Robert Heavyweight, Russell Parr, Norman Greenwood, Robert Banks, Geoffrey Sanderson, Brian Howarth, Kenneth Huest, John King, Kenneth Jones, Harold Ainsworth, James Seddon, Roy Pickup.
Third Row—(Girls): Mona Kay, Eileen Foster, Margaret Gray, Joyce Chadwick, Kathleen Knipe, Jessie Connor, Gloria Mills, Marion Kelly, Jane Kelly, Annie Harris, Peggy Amos, Ethel Humphreys, Dorothy Williams, Muriel King. **(Boys):** John Wilding, Gordon Halliwell, Eric Robinson, Angus Wharton, Donald Robinson, Leslie Ainsworth, Harold Harrison, John King.
Fourth Row (back)—(Girls): Margaret Lea, Joyce Martlew, Jean Lockwood, Dorothy Kirk, Phyllis, Ricketts, Jessie Harrison, Dorothy Pickup, Joyce Hargreaves, Molly Barker, Jessie Bannister, Una Mills. **(Boys):** Norman Brown, Roy Williams, James Moss, Graham Santus, Eric Ainsworth, John Connor, James Williams, James Hogan, Allan Jones, Kenneth Pincock, Horace Thompson, William Thompson, Tom Mess.

A NEW BEGINNING.

A freehold site of 913 square yards in Dicconson Street opposite Standishgate Chapel was purchased for £421, the deed being executed on 12th May, 1850, between the Rt. Hon. Lord Skelmersdale and another, and these fourteen trustees:

Rev. F. Payne (1813), James Martin (1780), Wm. Brown (1790), William Holt, William Altham (1809), Richard Christopher, George Meek (1808), George Beswick, Wm. Melling, Senr., Joseph Meek (1810), Thomas Howarth, John Meek (1811), William Yeomans (1791), Robert Meek (1812).

The Trustees soon decided to proceed with the erection of new Day and Sunday School premises, but some sturdy opponents on the Sunday School Committee would not agree to accept a Government grant towards building, being fearful of State control. On 17th March, 1852, Mr. P. F. Rawson, Sunday School Secretary (father of Alderman W. H. Rawson, Freeman of Accrington), sent the Day School Trustees a resolution "that this Meeting take no action on the proposed new Schools on the present Trust Deed." Despite continued opposition the Schools were opened in January, 1856, but "the Split" on Sunday, 28th September, 1856, had as one of its chief causes this dissension about the building of the Dicconson Street Schools. Many had not approved of the new Day Schools and it is notable that the Methodist Free Church, which they soon founded in King Street, did not establish a Day School. The Foundation Stone of the New School was laid on 30th May, 1855, and the School was opened on 21st January, 1856, 700 persons being present at the Tea which followed the opening ceremony.

The building originally consisted of two large rooms, two class rooms, and the master's house. The largest room (90-ft. x 30-ft.) is the main room of the upper school; it was fitted, at the street end, with a large gallery from the floor level half-way to the ceiling. This gallery was replaced in 1883-4 by the double classroom, approached by the lower balcony. The second room (57-ft. x 24-ft) is the former infant school before the present classroom was partitioned off. It had also a gallery for the so-called "Gallery" lessons. The upper balcony and the two adjoining classrooms were built over the infants' room in 1883-4. The Master's house, at one time used as a Mause, has been occupied by the caretaker since 1902.

The pioneer in this Educational work was Mr. Joseph Meek, J.P., a noted member of a great Methodist family many of whom were closely connected with Wigan Methodism. A brief note will indicate something of the importance of this Methodist clan. George (born 1806) and Joseph (1810) reached Wigan in June, 1830, and a year later opened a drapery business. Their father, the Rev. Joseph Meek, came to Wigan as Minister Superintendent in 1835, with his wife, the joyful mother of children ten sons and one daughter. Their fourth son, John (1811), after a few years as a tutor at Woodhouse Grove, joined his brothers in Wigan before launching out with Robert (1812) in a similar business in Macclesfield (their mother's town) in 1837. George, Robert and John Meek also founded a wholesale business in Manchester in

1839, whilst Benjamin (born 1820) and Thomas (1822) began in Preston on 3rd August, 1844. Thus began four large business establishments all run by the Meek brothers. The spirit of these men is exemplified in the two young drapers of Preston who decided to devote the whole of the receipts of their Opening Day to the Building Fund for Standishgate Chapel. That noble purpose caught the imagination of Preston Methodists who rushed to buy as if to a Jumble Sale!

The Wigan Wesleyan Day Schools may be regarded as a memorial of the zeal and generosity of the Meek family in the cause of Methodist education. Joseph Meek was generously supported by his brother and by his brother-in-law, William Altham (born 1809). Joseph's sons, George (born 1841, later a Swedenborgian minister), William Ombler (1843, later a Doctor in Manchester), Joseph Herbert (1856, later a solicitor), and Ben Owen (1858, a veterinary surgeon), were also active promoters or managers of the Wesleyan Day Schools in the Circuit. All the sons except the last named entered the Wigan business but all forsook business in favour of other callings.

Mr. Joseph Meek, the recognised leader and authority, was frequently consulted by Anglican and R.C. clergy as to procedure in establishing and managing their Day Schools. He was Deputy Mayor of Wigan in 1864 and would have become Chief Magistrate had not affliction caused him to retire. He suffered for 10 years from increasing rheumatism and was confined to a bath chair for some years before his death at Swinley Hall in 1885.

The following is a summary of the Building Account dated 1856:—

£	£
Subscriptions (inclusive of £600 from Messrs. Meek)	Messrs. H. Hughes, Builders
1894	2980
Government Grant, from Committee of Council for Education	O. Scarisbrick, Esq., for land
1644	421
Grant from Wesleyan Education Committee	Wilson and Fuller, for plans
70	50
	Furnishing
	157
£3608	£3608

A Tablet adorns the walls of Standishgate, and is inscribed: "In loving memory of Joseph Meek, J.P., who peacefully entered into rest on the seventh of May, 1885, in the seventy-sixth year of his age. He was interred in the Wigan Cemetery. For more than half a century he was identified with Wesleyan Methodism in the Wigan Circuit and by his fostering care and liberality greatly helped its extension. He lived an active and useful life beloved and honoured by all classes of the community. The memory of the just is blessed." Has Methodism in Wigan known any figure more influential in the heyday of his strength or more pathetic in the crippled weakness of his closing years?

From 1845 to 1903 the School was governed by the local Wesleyan Manager, under the Chairmanship of the Superintendent Minister. For nearly sixty years these gentlemen, in addition to

exercising a fostering oversight of the education, bore the entire responsibility for the school buildings, for the school staff, and for the furniture and requisites. The income consisted of subscriptions, school pence and government grants.

From 1856 onwards the Treasurers have been:—

Joseph Meek, Henry Farr, Robert Beesley, Oates Rushton, J. S. Read, and W. H. Rushton.

The Secretaries have been:—

W. O. Meek, John Knight (38 years), F. R. Dawson, and now his nephew, R. H. Dawson.

The building of Wesleyan schools was much encouraged by the Committee of Council for Education which preceded the Board of Education. That Committee wrote in 1847 that it "had great confidence that in all their arrangements for the establishment of schools in connexion with their congregations the Wesleyan Education Committee will rejoice to become the instrument of diffusing liberally the great benefits of Christian civilization to that large part of Her Majesty's subjects on whose welfare they have hitherto exerted so large an influence." One example of how the seven other Circuit schools came into being may now be given. Lamberhead Green quickly following Wigan opened her first Wesleyan Day School in 1847. "A low and dingy room" being outgrown the Atherton Wesleyan School was opened in December, 1858, and named in honour of the late William Atherton, of the Green, who became President of the Conference in 1846 and died in 1850. His son, Sir Wm. Atherton, K.C., M.P., Attorney General gave 200 guineas, the Wesleyan Education Committee made a grant, and the Government gave £684. In the previous year, that of the Indian Mutiny, Hindley had built a Day School, and Aspall followed in 1859. Ince opened in 1867 and then in 1870, in preparation for compulsory education, three more schools were opened—Platt Bridge, Blackrod, and Newtown. Five of these eight schools are still in active service though Hindley, Platt Bridge and Newtown have been closed. The Wigan Day School has thus rendered eighty-eight years of service and the Wigan Circuit through its eight schools a total of no less than 488 years.

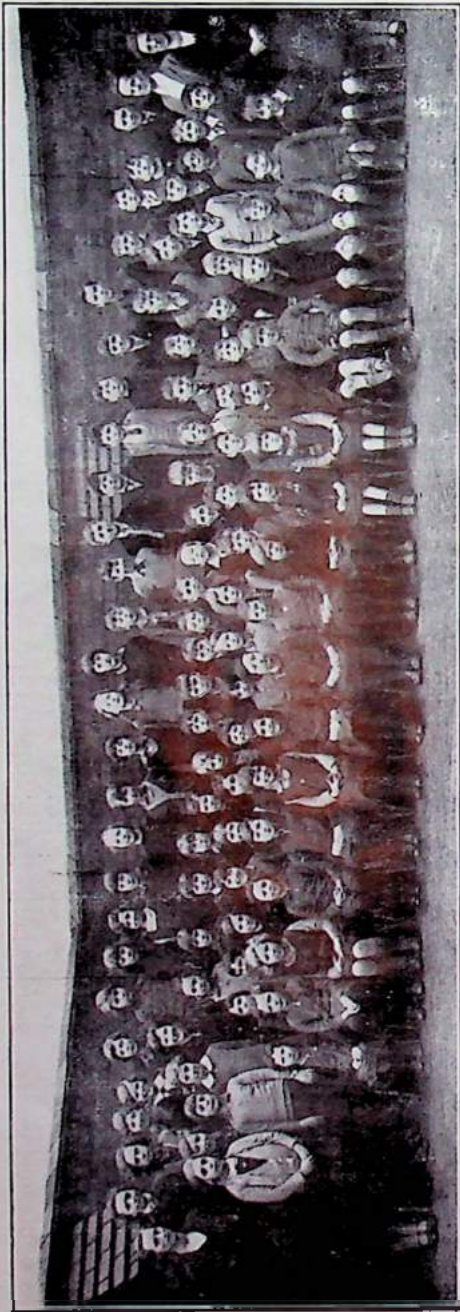
THE NEW SCHOOL.

1856—1933.

The **origin** of the school and of its present buildings has now been shown, and in this chapter we give a broad outline of the growth, life and management of the school, reserving for the concluding chapter a panoramic view of its educational work.

The New School in Dicconson Street opened in January, 1856, rejoiced in being "conducted by James Taylor from the Training College at Westminster." It should be remembered that the teachers of that day were nearly all untrained, poorly qualified, and miserably paid. An Inspector of Lancashire schools (184-) describes the ways in which Masters sought to eke out a living. "At two places the masters are weavers 'between whites' as they call it. Two others had been carried away suddenly, nothing loth,

DAY SCHOOL JUNIOR DEPT. "B"—Group 2.



First Row—(Girls): Sybil McQuillan, Margaret H. Smith, Margaret Phillipson, Reta Smith, Lillian Meadows, Lillian Gogarty, Joan Fortune, Eileen Cunniffe, Alice Wynnard, Dorothy Charnock, Hetty Gogarty, Ivy Gogarty, (Boys): Thomas Dutton, Peter Haddock, Norman Darbyshire, Samson Butler, Joseph Hutchinson, Colin Taberner.
 Second Row—(Girls): Hilda Lovatt, Jean Millard, Brenda Hinghson, Minnie Johnson, Elsie Shaw, Joan Brindle, Jennie Southworth, Joyce Smith, Margaret Owen, Kathleen Gaskell, Margaret Whittle, Margaret Armstrong, (Boys): Roger Collier, Dunsden Owen, George Murray, Brian Darbyshire, Harold Hurst, Frank Holland, Walter Brown, Arthur Hall, Tom Cave, Eric Purnby, Wilfred Lewis.
 Third Row—(Girls): Margery Haddock, Edna Kay, Eunice Webster, Edna Highton, Minnie Haddock, Joan Gaskell, Hilda Fatha, Jean Dickinson, Minnie Knowles. (Boys): Robert Fowler, John Yates, Hugh Smith, Denis Haskforth, Norman Foster, Samuel Housley, Norman Corbett, Leslie Gratton, Eric Grundy, Stauley Gaskell, Ivor Thomas, Donovan Welele, Alan Gowers, Frank Ingram.
 Fourth Row (back)—(Girls): Sybil Gray, Joan Hague, Betty Molyneux, Marguerita Pitchford, Thelma Green, Doreen Jackson, Constance James, Kathleen Dyke, Margaret Smith, Eleanor Melling, Gladys Langborne, Beryl Taberner, Elsie Kenyon, Lillian Foster. (Boys): Frank Wilson, Laurence Crook, Victor Helme, Stanley Gaskell, Ronnie Holliday, Jack Green, Albert Gibson, Alex. Gibson, Stanley Wynnard, Kenneth Aldred, Ernest Hutchinson, Rounie Bradshaw.

Teachers: Miss A. White, Miss A. Latham, Miss M. Wilcock.

by surveyors for railways at the irresistible bait of two guineas per day. Others are parish clerks, sextons, organists, postmasters, registrars, lecturers at mechanics' institutes, two are farmers, one a brewer, another has a druggist's shop, and all for the same reason—that they can hardly live by their scholastic labour." In those 'good old days' there was no Burnham scale!

This new School had Departments for Boys and Girls. The pupils paid 4d. per week, and the Infants, under Miss Siddell, paid 2d. and 3d. Probably those who paid the smaller sum paid "for reading only." One early school advertised in a Wigan newspaper "them that larns manners" pay two pence extra! Apparently that school did not specialise in grammar or spelling. In comparison with this, our School was "well away" to use a good Lancashire phrase. An Industrial Department was established in this opening year for Juvenile workers in mines and factories, and the teaching was severely utilitarian "mining labour with learning." A Notice on the Circuit Quarterly Plan of October, 1856, explains that "A Committee of ladies regularly visit the Day Schools to superintend the plain sewing, knitting, etc., in the Industrial Department. We also note with interest that "a class for the instruction of young persons in various branches of domestic economy is held in one of the classrooms every Thursday evening at 7-30 conducted by Mrs. Gardner." Even at its start in 1856 our school was very up-to-date.



William Boyd, Jane Kimmer, Ellen Smith, W. T. Holker, John Nutt,
Mrs. Wainwright, Mr. Wainwright, Miss Dimond, and three "little" Teachers.

To many the happiest days at school are the holidays! Stolen waters are sweet, and a stolen holiday is delicious. Does that explain why on "Wigan Fair Monday" in June, 1867, only six pupils attended school, and only three on "August Monday"? Old folks will remember that before the institution of "St. Lubbock's Day" in 1872, "August Mondays" were devoted to Miners' Processions. On 29th May, 1873, the school broke up for the Midsummer holidays for two weeks. Holidays were very short

as otherwise the teachers would have lost their weekly pence! The holidays that year commenced early as the Prince and Princess of Wales were to open the Royal Albert Edward Infirmary on 10th June. A great platform was erected around Standishgate Chapel and our scholars enjoyed a splendid view of the future King Edward VII. and Queen Alexandra. About that time "a little unpleasantness occurred in consequence of a boy having lost his cap supposed to have been stolen by some other child." Is this the origin of "the hatless brigade" in Wigan? Fighting was commoner then than now and "Thomas Halton was severely hurt through being set to fight a boy from the big school." And even the Headmaster (Thomas Wainwright) was "annoyed by a quantity of sand being thrown through a broken window" ("say it with sand!"). He could, however, defend himself. For example, he "admitted several young children who gave a good deal of trouble all week." He then adds that he "gave a Natural History lesson on Monkeys"! A lovely tit-for-tat! Our sympathies are, however, with the pupils when one day "attendance was poor owing to the arrival of a circus in town." Any child who chose to attend school that day was surely mentally deficient! On another happy occasion Mr. W. O. Meek visited the Infants and promised oranges and buns on the day when the school broke up. A few days later an astonished teacher found "sixty-one children present, the greatest number I have ever had." A delightful example of cause and effect!

Miss Mary J. Dimond (1867-1874), who followed Miss Siddeil as Headmistress of the Infants' School, records her difficulties in regards to Monitors or "little teachers" (as they were called). There were children under 13, usually girls, who were really "minders" of younger children and were paid a shilling a week. We read these notes regarding them in successive years: "E. J. Bertie minded the little ones," "School out of order through the absence of monitress suffering from a sore eye." Discipline was obviously cheap in those days at one shilling per week. "Re-opened school without a monitor, Lily Pedley who suited us well having gone to the Sewing Machine. It is difficult to keep monitors for when they reach the age of about 13 they are able to earn more at other kinds of work." And again, "Elizabeth Hodgson who has suited us very well informed me that she was going to work at the factory."

Another "little teacher" at a later date, Jessie Smith, has confessed "I simply loved teaching and was sorry when home time came. Wasn't it a shame not to give me a proper chance, for I taught in school and had to acquire Standard V., VI., and VII. work at night? I taught at Lamberhead Green School about two years and then returned to Wigan." This "little teacher" became a Class Leader and the first Wesley Guild Secretary in Wigan. Romance was now waiting for Jessie round the next corner. Her parents had been married in Standishgate the home of many romances. Their six children were all scholars in the Day School, and all, two sons and four daughters, including Jessie, were married in Standishgate. She is now Mrs. William Tait, of Sheffield, and the mother of the Rev. D. D. Tait, M.A., who, like his mother, was baptized in Standishgate.

If Waterloo was won upon the playing fields of Eton, why was our school so slow to develop athletic prowess? One would like to know who first introduced drill, clubs, dumbbells, and wands, but on such matters the Log Book is as inscrutable as the Sphinx. In regard to Sport, the school needed a brushing up. A new broom sweeps clean and in 1895 the incoming Head Master, Mr. Fillingham (amongst other advances) whisked his boys into the Swimming Baths! He had later the joy of seeing some of them emerge as members of Wigan's famous water polo team.

The scholars from 1880 to the Great War always numbered over 500 and the playgrounds were quite inadequate. Did the lads take to the water because of the scarcity of land? There is, however, some vacant space behind the Chapel and when the use of this was granted to the school it proved as beneficial as a new lung. Mr. Fillingham also organised inter-school matches of cricket and football and saw the school enter (and exit!) in the final for the "Gaskell" Cup in 1901. Some eight years later the School had an unbeaten Rugby team which won the cup, medals, watches and chains, presented by the Wigan Rugby Club. This triumph was repeated about two seasons later. Old boys have a lively remembrance of football thrills on the Mesnes and at the Central Park, and of cricket on Whitley Fields—our Eton playing fields!

Many social events must be omitted, but not two Gala Days in February, 1910. The senior boys and girls gave a stage performance of "As you like it," followed by a School Concert, in aid of the Mayor's Million Sixpences Fund. The Mayor, Alderman S. Wood, J.P., an "Old Boy," graced the occasion with his presence. So many were unable to gain admission that the concert was repeated the next evening, and again with great benefit to the Mayor's Infirmary Fund.

Alderman Wood, J.P., had the distinction of being Mayor for four consecutive years (1907—1910), an honour granted to only one other Mayor. To him is largely due the building of the Out-Patient Department of the R.A.E. Infirmary. Our School is rightly proud of counting him amongst its alumni.

During the Great War (1914-1918) the School did "business as usual" under the quiet yet very effective and scholarly guidance of Mr. Wormell. Difficulties abounded, some due to the absence through the war of all men teachers except the Headmaster, others due to the growing defects of the premises.



JESSIE SMITH (Mrs. W. Tait, of Sheffield).
JOSEPH SMITH, Local Preacher, S.S. Teacher.

These difficulties continued into the reign of Arthur Cowling, an undaunted spirit, who held the fort for the next ten years (1917-1927). On April 19, 1918, Mr. Cowling wrote in his Log book, "A Tank is visiting Wigan in order to encourage local investments in the War Loan. Our children have taken up the matter with enthusiasm. During the week we have raised £1,331 7s. 0d." This money was paid over at the Tank in the Market Place.

Many of the old scholars offered themselves for war services, and ten of these "gave the most that man can give—life itself."

For God,
 For King and Country,
 For loved ones, home, and empire,
 For the sacred cause of Justice and
 the freedom of the world."

F. Allen	Lieut. Fred Naylor, B.A.
Philip H. Ascroft	Harold Smith
T. Halliwell	J. O. Wall
A. Hilton	H. Wall
Arnold Melling	A. West

MANAGEMENT.

A note must now be made in regard to the management of the School. The Day School of 1845 and its successor of 1856 were governed by a D.S. Committee, similar to the much older S.S. Committee. The original S.S. had established and administered branch schools in Goose Green and other places. Similarly, when a demand arose for a Wesleyan Day School the Wigan Managers accepted responsibility for school after school and added representatives of each new school to the Wigan Committee. Thus the local Committee became a Circuit Education Committee and governed all the day schools. On major questions of policy and finance this Committee was advised by the Connexional Secretary at Westminster. These Circuit Managers were very active and met about six times each year; for example, their 91st meeting was held on November 21st, 1870. Such zeal in promoting schools deserves recognition in view of the heavy financial cost which they voluntarily incurred. The accounts of the five older schools for two years about this period—1870-2—show that 66 per cent. of the expenditures (omitting all Trust items) was met locally and 34 per cent. by Government grants. In the Wigan school the proportion was 76 and 24 per cent. These facts show the generosity of the Methodists of that day in the voluntary support of their schools. The managers, practical business men, believed deeply both in religion and in education and sought "to serve the present age." Thus in 1871 they held a great six days' Bazaar to raise £700 for Day School and Circuit purposes. The Mayor, Mr. Nathanael Eckersley, J.P., who opened the Bazaar, gave clear reason for the zeal of the managers when he affirmed "I may safely assert that fully one quarter of the people in our neighbourhood are being brought up in ignorance and without much, if any, knowledge of God."

The eager spirit of these managers was incarnate in their secretaries—Joseph Meek, J.P.; W. O. Meek (his son); John

Knight; F. R. Dawson, J.P. These men each ran a great race and like the runners each handed on the Lamp of Life.

In 1855, whilst the school was being built, "there came a man sent from God whose name was John"—John Knight. Originally from London, he lavished almost fifty years of service upon Wigan Methodism. Of "manly and striking presence, strong personality and nobility of spirit," he excelled as a preacher and class leader. But his greatest service was to Education. John Knight became a zealous member of the old Wigan School Board, a Manager, and then Secretary of our Circuit Education Committee. He was always an advocate of progress and efficiency, and was called "The Nestor of the Day Schools" in consideration of his ripe experiences and mellow character.

In his case, as in that of other men, his work prevailed because his wife and family sustained his hands, even as Israel prevailed when Aaron and Hur stayed up the hands of Moses. Mrs. Knight and her three daughters co-operated with him and did valiant work for Day and Sunday Schools.

The Headmaster's (Mr. W. O. Fillingham) Log Book on December 19th, 1905, thus refers to the passing of Mr. Knight:

"It is with intense sorrow and regret that we have to record the death of Mr. John Knight last evening, for 38 years the Correspondent, and for years before that a Manager of this school. He was the most frequent visitor to the school and always manifested the deepest interest in the progress and welfare of the children, and in the work of the teachers. The school has sustained irreparable loss by his decease."

Shortly before the death of Mr. Knight, the Education (Balfour) Act of 1902 had set up Local Education Authorities to take over the Voluntary schools. In 1903 ours thus became a "Non-Provided" school. The new Committee consisted of four Foundation Managers (Wesleyans) and two Council or Representative Managers appointed by the Board of Education. The Wesleyan Managers were the Rev. A. F. Barley, Superintendent and Chairman, John Knight, Secretary, J. S. Read, Treasurer, and F. R. Dawson. Their colleagues, the two Council Managers, were Henry Brierley, B.A., LL.D., Registrar of Wigan County Court and Chairman of Wigan Higher Education Committee, and Councillor S. Taylor, J.P.

From 1907 the Managers had difficulty in satisfying the requirements of the Board of Education. The Board urged that extensive repairs and alterations be effected, but the Managers demurred to demands which they deemed to be excessive. Before a settlement was reached the War broke out and matters remained in abeyance. At length, in January, 1924, after various interviews the Board of Education sent an ultimatum threatening "to withdraw their recognition in view of the serious defects of the premises." Thus after sixty-eight years of service the school was blacklisted!

The Managers accepted the challenge and sent two sharpshooters—J. S. Read (Treasurer) and R. H. Dawson (Secretary)—

* Postnote: Between 1903 and 1933 the following have served successively as Council Managers—Miss Bryham, Mr. W. Anderson, Miss Beth Ellis (novelist), Mr. W. Rawcliffe, Alderman H. Farr, J.P., Rev. J. Pickett, Rev. J. H. M. Johnson, Councillor T. Clarke, J.P., Councillor Miss E. McAvoy, J.P.

SOME HEAD TEACHERS and TWO SECRETARIES



Thos. Wainwright.

W. O. Fillingham.

T. W. Wormell

Marianne Scarlett
(Mrs. J. Rylands).

Alice R. Burnet
(Mrs. Church).

Marie Stuart
(Mrs. Moss)

John Knight,
Secretary.

R. F. Dawson, J.P.,
Secretary.

Arthur Cowling

to London to engage the Board in battle royal. The Wigan Director of Education were summoned to London to attend the fray. On reaching the Board-room the two managers deployed into position, joined by the Wesleyan Secretary for Education, the Rev. H. B. Workman, M.A., D.Lit., D.D., a very big gun! Dr. Workman opened with a barrage great in range, in accuracy, and in weight of metal. An armistice was soon suggested, and a happy compromise was reached. The Board consented to continue to recognise the School if certain alterations and repairs were made, and certain facilities were granted by the Managers.

The year 1927 brought further administrative changes which vitally affected our school in common with many others in the town. The "Hadow Report" had urged the transfer of all children of 11 and upwards to specially equipped Senior Schools. In 1927 the Wigan Education Committee opened the Whelley Central School under the Head Mastership of Mr. W. O. Fillingham, our Headmaster 1895-1912. In that year all our Senior scholars moved to Whelley and did so each subsequent years on attaining the age of 11 until the new Gidlow Senior School was opened at Easter, 1932. Our school thereby became a Junior School under the Headship of Miss Latham, whose service dated from 1915.

Meanwhile, repairs and improvements had been carried out year after year until finally the Board of Education wrote that the school was now "removed from the list of schools with defective premises and will in future be recognised as providing accommodation for 220 Junior Mixed and Infant children."

The present Managers are Rev. G. W. Oliver (Chairman), R. H. Dawson (Secretary), W. H. Rushton (Treasurer), and G. A. Telfer, with Councillor A. Clarke and Councillor Mrs. E. Ashurst.

III.—THE EDUCATION RECORD.

The educational records of the school prior to 1869 are scanty and contain little of outstanding interest. The reports show that from its foundation in 1856 the capitation grants were small, and the condition of the school remained "substantially unchanged," in other words, the school was marking time.

The coming of Mr. Thomas Wainwright in 1869 marks the beginning of an era of high merit and achievement which continues to the present day. The Government Inspector of 1869 reported regarding his Mixed School of 110 scholars:—"The condition of this school is much improved since the last inspection. The promise then made of increased activity and efficiency in the management of the school has been fulfilled. The new Committee has commenced a vigorous and effective administration, the attendance of the scholars is increasing, and the new master is working well and there is a marked improvement in most respects since the last examination."

Two years later the pupils had increased by fifty per cent, and the Inspector wrote:—"This school is deserving of the highest commendation. Its discipline and instruction display all the marks of a careful and competent master's hand. The boys passed with

great success and there was pleasing evidence of the attention that is paid to higher instruction."

During the seventies the average attendance rose steadily for the whole school from 133 in 1869 to 283 in 1879. The growth and popularity of the school are indicated by the numbers on the roll in each decade since 1870:

1870	1880	1890	1900	1910	1920	1930
230	338	532	547	566	394	189

The peak year was 1906, when there were 617 names on the register. The registers of the first decade of this century show that scholars came from Eccleston, Chorley, Standish, Cauthurst, Appley Bridge, Parbold, Newburgh, Haigh, Aspull, New Springs, Ince, Hindley, Pemberton, and Orrell.

TEACHERS, 1900.



Back Row (left to right)—W. S. Fairbrother (M.Sc.), Miss Eleanor Ross (Lamberhead Green), Miss Mears, Miss Passfield, Miss Smith, Miss Rippon (now U.S.A.), Mr. Briggs (Coppull).
 Middle Row—Miss May Ryder, Miss Fairhurst, Mrs. W. O. Fillingham, Mr. W. O. Fillingham, Miss Collin, Miss G. A. Knight.
 Front—Miss Effie Marsden, Miss Mahel Nutt.

Since 1869, for upwards of 60 years, the school has consistently maintained a high standard, attested by the following brief extracts from the Inspector's Reports touching a wide variety of points:—

- 1875—Good order and industry prevails, good moral influence, teaching very careful, instruction sound and successful.
- 1876—Encouraging success in a wider examination.
- 1882—An excellent examination, condition highly praiseworthy.

1886—Work intelligent and thoroughly satisfactory in all respects.

1887—Fully maintains its high standard of efficiency.

1889—Taught with energy, intelligence, and general success.

1895—Very good discipline, highly successful methods of teaching, work neat and very accurate.

In this year (1895) Mr. Wainwright retired, having served with great distinction and devotion for over 26 years. What Arnold was to Rugby, Wainwright was to Wigan School.

"God calls away His workmen, but He carries on His work."

And in evidence of this we read that the school in 1898, three years later, "ranks with the best in the district for skilful and successful teaching in a more than average range of subjects."

It remained in 1900—"In every way an excellent school."

In 1901 (H.M. Inspector's notes)—"Well selected course of instruction given with thoroughly successful results. Discipline and tone deserve much praise."

In 1907 the Annual Reports ceased, and closed on this high note—"Reached a high standard, work generally exceptionally careful and accurate."

The Circuit published a Monthly Magazine from January, 1907, till 1913, and in the issue of June, 1907, is a page which throws a floodlight on our schools, and especially upon the one in Wigan. The page is entitled

'SPLENDID EDUCATIONAL SUCCESSES.'

"The results of the recent examinations for the Junior Exhibitions awarded by the County Council are remarkably creditable. We give the particulars below, and they speak for themselves.

*School.	County Area.	Awards.
(a) Standishgate	Wigan Borough	9 out of 13 awarded
(b) Lamberhead Green	Area No. 19	10 15 ..
(c) Platt Bridge	Hindley	8 13 ..
(d) Ince	Ince	3 3 ..
(e) Blackrod	Area No. 18	4 7 ..
(f) Aspull	ditto	2

The Wesleyan Schools have thus appropriated in all 36 out of the 51 (or 71 per cent.) Scholarships allotted. Such results are unmistakable evidence of the efficiency of the educational work in the Circuit Schools, and are eloquent testimony to the skill and devotion of the teachers. Enquiry shows, moreover, that they are the results of steady and continuous effort in ordinary class work, and are not due to cramming methods and special coaching. The Exhibitions are for four years at approved Secondary Schools, with free tuition, travelling, books, and maintenance, if required. The total maximum value of the 36 awards is estimated at £1,512.

"Wigan Grammar School Scholarships.—Standishgate has annexed four scholarships out of those awarded to Schools of Wigan Borough. The successful boys are: Norman Stanley Hall, 2nd on the list; Harold

* Footnote: The Headmasters (1907) were (a) W. G. Fillingham, (b) J. Molyneux, (c) R. Pickles, (d) H. Holt, (e) A. Rushton, (f) A. Coeling.

† Miss A. Ross married Dr. Wm. Hollough, M.D., of Essex.

‡ Mr. D. A. Mackenzie, M.C., M.A., is now Sub-Editor of "The Teachers' World."

Stuart Rimmer, 3rd; Thomas Henry Walker, 4th; and Philip Harold Ascroft, 10th. Norman Hall is the fourth brother to obtain this distinction a Standishgate.

Distinctions for Pupil Teachers.—In the Board of Education's Examinations for the P.T. Preliminary Certificate, †Miss Agnes Ross (Standishgate School) heads the list of 101 successful candidates with 'distinctions' in five out of the six subjects taken, the next highest being that of Mr. Percy H. Holgate, of Hindley, with four distinctions, while the third highest place is held by Miss Grace James (a teacher in Standishgate School) with three distinctions. ‡Mr. Donald A. Mackenzie (Standishgate) also had distinctions in three subjects."

The School has a proud record of "Scholarships," for during the past thirty-five years—1898-1932—no less than 343 scholarships have been awarded. The winners proceeded for Higher Education to the Wigan Grammar School, Girls' High School, Wigan Mining and Technical College, Ashton Grammar School, or the Bolton Secondary School. Some proceeded further to the Universities, by means of the "Powell," Borough, and State University Scholarships.

Not all, however, won such awards, for we read in the Log Book "_____s father called to object to any punishment whatever being inflicted upon his child. He stated the child, a clever child, must not be punished at all but simply left to work at her own inclination." This is the sequel—the child did not win a scholarship; the father was disgusted; and the mother declaimed "I'm having my way with the second child!"

The recent administrative changes have, as we have seen, restricted the scope and area of the school's activities, yet it amply maintains its high moral character and its long tradition of efficiency and continues to send its full quota of well prepared pupils to higher schools. The quality of the school to-day is shown in this pleasing picture in the Inspector's Report of 1932—"Very well conducted; children of good type; on excellent terms with their teachers; behaviour natural, friendly, and pleasant; attainments good; subjects well taught."

EPILOGUE.

Standishgate.

Our Mother Church! Our Mother Schools!

To us she has bequeathed a noble heritage. We love to recall her humble beginnings in the Buck-i'-th'-Vine Yard; to retrace her chequered history; to restore her vanished generations of preachers, teachers, and people. We love to linger on the names of those known and unknown to us ("Unknown and yet Well Known"), who lived and died in the holy service of our Mother Church.

Standishgate with her daughter Churches and Schools has inspired the faith and lit the minds of multitudes. She stands a monument of the earnest and loving devotion of many not mentioned here but whose names are written in the Book of Life.

The history of our Sunday School is incomplete. These one hundred and fifty years are but a prelude. God's work is still awaiting us. This record stops in mid-career.

Our Day School has also a great history and a great tradition. Her future is in the hands of God. We lay bare her record without shame and with an honest pride.

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For the Past—Thankfulness.

For the Present—Faithfulness.

For the Future—Confidence.

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"The best of all is, God is with us."

DAY SCHOOL HEAD TEACHERS.

The Original School, 1846—1856: Ann H. Siddell.

The New School, 1856—1865:

Boys' Dept. James Taylor.
Girls' Dept. M. R. Baxter and Ellen Martin.
Infants' Dept. Ann H. Siddell.

Mixed Department:

Charles Gatenby 1865—1867
Arthur G. Talbot 1867—1868
Thomas Wainwright 1869—1895
W. O. Fillingham 1895—1912
T. W. Wormell 1913—1917
Arthur Cowling 1917—1927

Infants' Department:

Mary J. Dimond 1867—1873
Marianne Scarlett 1874—1879
Helen McNeil 1880—1883
M. Stuart (Mrs. Moss) 1883—1891
A. R. Burnet (Mrs. Church) 1891—1900
Eleanor Pasfield 1900—1902
Catherine White 1902—1915
Nellie Latham 1915—1927

"Junior" School:

Headmistress: Nellie Latham 1927

Miss Latham became Head of the re-organised Junior School in 1927, following Mr. Cowling's retirement. Her service dates therefore from 1915 to the present time.

CAREERS.

Analysis of the careers of pupils who, with a few exceptions, were pupils 1895-1920. The list includes 46 University Graduates, viz.,

B.A., 19; M.A., 4; B.Sc., 9; M.Sc., 5; M.B., B.Ch., 7; LL.B., 1; Ph.D., 1; Accountancy, 4; Banking and Insurance, 17; The Church, 8 (Methodist 3, C. of E. 4, Congregational 1); Civil Service, 7; Local Government, 9; Commerce and Industry, 11; Directors and Principals, also many Managers, etc.; Doctors of Medicine, 7; Dentists (L.D.S.), 3.

	Primary Schools:	
	Head Masters, 4; Head Mistresses, 6; Asst. Masters, 12; Asst. Mistresses, 42.	
Education, 88	}	Secondary Schools:
		Head Masters, 4, Asst. Masters, 8; Asst. Mistresses, 10.
		Training College Lecturers, 2.
		—Total, 88.

Other teachers known prior to 1895 20

Engineering, 5; Pharmacy, 3; Law, 3 (1 Barrister, K.C., ex-M.P.; 1 Town Clerk, L.L.B., O.B.E., Freeman of Wigan); Librarians, 2 (2 Chiefs of Public Libraries); The Press, 4 (2 Chief Reporters, 2 Assistant Editors); Scientific Research, 4 (2 M.Sc., 2 B.Sc. Hons).

APPENDIX.

NOW praise we great and famous men,
The fathers, named in story;
And praise the Lord Who now as then
Reveals in man His glory.
Praise we the wise and brave and strong,
Who graced their generation;
Who helped the right, and fought the wrong,
And made our folk a nation.

Praise we the peaceful men of skill
Who builded homes of beauty,
And, rich in art, made richer still
The brotherhood of duty.
Praise we the glorious names we know;
And they—whose names have perished,
Lost in the haze of long ago—
In silent love be cherished.

In peace their sacred ashes rest,
Fulfilled their day's endeavour;
They blessed the earth, and they are blessed
Of God and man for ever.
So praise we great and famous men,
The fathers, named in story;
And praise the Lord Who now as then
Reveals in man His glory.

—W. G. Tarrant.

The Committee of Management for all the eight Day Schools in the Wigan Circuit, 1870:—

Rev. H. Oldfield, 32, Dicconson Street, Wigan (buried in Circuit Grave, Wigan Cemetery, 1871); Rev. J. Hammond, 1, Upper Dicconson Street; John Knight (Secretary), Wallgate; Thos. Charnock (Convenor), Wallgate; Thos. Dawson, 31, Standishgate; Wm. Altham, Preston (retired); James Kellett, Market Place; Thos. Hall, Darlington Street; Henry Farr, Pagefield; George Royle, Hindley; W. O. Meek, 17 and 19, Wallgate; Geo. Meek, 17 and 19, Wallgate; Joseph Meek, J.P., Southport (temporary); A. H. Crossley, 31, Market Street; Simeon Lord, Hope House, Lower Ince; J. E. Livesey, Lower Ince; George Jackson, 82, Scholes; R. Beesley, 13 and 15, Wallgate, S. T. Bowler, 70, Scholes; C. Burgess, Market Place; Chas. White, Dicconson Street; John Young, Aspull; Jeremiah Rigby, Aspull; J. T. Ashton, King Street; M. Worthington, Ince; John Hartley, Lamberhead Green; Chas. Brown, Standishgate; Thos. Hickson, Newtown; Abraham Lord, Platt Bridge; John Ridyard, Platt Bridge; John Ridyard, Junr., Platt Bridge.

These men were added to the Committee between 1870 and 1903:—S. Leather and Rattray (Blackrod), Joseph Wainwright, John Derbyshire, T. Jones, George Jackson, Oates Rushton, George Rushton, Samuel Melling, J.P., Jabez Boggis, J. Piggin, Thos. Holker, E. Bolton, J.P., J. H. Royle, W. T. Holker, G. A. Telfer, Henry Farr, Junr.

STILL o'er these scenes my memory wakes,

And broods with more than miser's care;

'Time but the impression deeper makes,

As streams their channels deeper wear.

ARISE! for the day is passing
And you lie dreaming on!
The others have buckled their armour
And forth to the fight are gone:
A place in the ranks awaits you,
Each man has some part to play;
The Past and the Future are nothing
In the face of the stern To-Day!

A. PROCTOR.